

Beethoven's Piano Sonatas
Part I
Professor Robert Greenberg



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San Francisco Performances

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Professor Greenberg has composed more than 45 works for a wide variety of instrumental and vocal ensembles. Recent performances of his works have taken place in New York, San Francisco, Chicago, Los Angeles, England, Ireland, Greece, Italy, and the Netherlands, where his *Child's Play* for String Quartet was performed at the Concertgebouw of Amsterdam. He has received numerous honors, including three Nicola de Lorenzo Composition Prizes and three Meet-the-Composer Grants. Recent commissions have come from the Koussevitzky Foundation at the Library of Congress, the Alexander String Quartet, the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, San Francisco Performances, the Strata Ensemble, and the XTET ensemble. Professor Greenberg is a board member and an artistic director of COMPOSERS, INC., a composers' collective/production organization based in San Francisco. His music is published by Fallen Leaf Press and CPP/Belwin and is recorded on the *Innova* label.

Professor Greenberg has performed, taught, and lectured extensively across North America and Europe. He is currently music historian-in-residence with San Francisco Performances, where he has lectured and performed since 1994, and resident composer and music historian to National Public Radio's "Weekend All Things Considered." He has served on the faculties of the University of California at Berkeley, California State University at Hayward, and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where he chaired the Department of Music, History and Literature from 1989–2001 and served as the Director of the Adult Extension Division from 1991–1996. He has lectured for some of the most prestigious musical and arts organizations in the United States, including the San Francisco Symphony (where for 10 years, he was host and lecturer for the symphony's nationally acclaimed "Discovery Series"), the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, the Van Cliburn Foundation, and the Chautauqua Institute. He is a sought-after lecturer for businesses and business schools, speaking at such diverse organizations as the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco and the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business, and has been profiled in various major publications, including the *Wall Street Journal, Inc.* magazine, and the *London Times*.

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Please note that many musical examples are drawn from *Beethoven: The Complete Piano Sonatas* from Claude Frank's 10-CD set on the Music & Arts Programs of America label.

Beethoven's Piano Sonatas

Scope:

Beethoven's 32 piano sonatas stand as a singular body of work in the keyboard literature. What makes them unique is their organic quality. Taken together, as a single corpus, they reveal their composer's compositional and artistic development of the genre, from the terse and powerful first sonata of 1795 to the revolutionary *Hammerklavier* Sonata of 1818 and the radical last three sonatas of 1820-22. Not content to work within the constraints of a pre-existing aesthetic, Beethoven pushed the genre to extremes, artistically, compositionally and technically, eventually writing music for an "idealized" piano that did not exist in his day, one that only came into existence some 40 years after his death.

The piano was Beethoven's personal voice and his musical laboratory. Continuously innovative, by the time he had written the *Pathétique* Sonata of 1799, Beethoven had moved beyond the constraints and the ideal of the Classical style. From 1800 onward, with a whole series of amazing sonatas such as the so-called *Funeral March*, the *Moonlight*, the *Pastoral* and the *Tempest*, it was as if he were redefining the genre from piece to piece. In 1804 Beethoven composed two cornerstones of the piano repertoire, among the greatest examples of his "heroic" style, the *Waldstein* and *Appassionata* Sonatas. The late piano sonatas, beginning with op. 101 of 1816, and including the *Hammerklavier*, op. 106, and the last three sonatas, op. 109, 110 and 111, became increasingly radical in terms of their harmonic usage, form and expressive content. Perhaps, most importantly, these last five sonatas reveal that Beethoven had come to grips with the duality of his musical character—an experimental composer of the Classical era whose compositional inspiration was the great Baroque composer, Johann Sebastian Bach. This is most perfectly manifest in his final Piano Sonata in C Minor, op. 111 of 1822, the first movement of which rather perfectly reconciles the Baroque genre fugue with Classical-era sonata form and ends on a note of sublime and ethereal calm.

This course presents a chronologically-based discussion of all 32 of Beethoven's sonatas, with a great deal of in-depth analysis. WordScore Guides™ are provided in the booklets as an aid to analysis for Piano Sonata no. 1 in F Minor, op. 2, no. 1, Piano Sonata no. 8 in C Minor, op. 13 (*Pathétique*), Piano Sonata no. 23 in F Minor, op. 57 (*Appassionata*), and Piano Sonata no. 29 in Bb Major, op. 106 (*Hammerklavier*).

Lecture One

Beethoven and the Piano

Scope: In this first lecture, we look briefly at the biography of Beethoven and the early history of the piano. As we will see over the course of these 24 lectures, Beethoven's piano sonatas capture his compositional development during his lifetime. We will trace this growth from its roots in the Classical tradition to its ultimate expression in Beethoven's mature, *avant garde* music. We close this lecture with a discussion of the recordings of Beethoven's piano sonatas used in this course, performed by the distinguished Claude Frank.

Outline

- I. Beethoven published 32 piano sonatas, spanning the length of his compositional career, from early 1795 to January 1822.
 - A. Beethoven spoke through the piano. In his solo piano music, he conceptualized essential musical ideas and tested compositional innovations. In this music, we hear the idiosyncratic nature of his musical "grammar" and pianism; the mercurial, often abrupt flow of ideas; the manner in which musical ideas take off in tangents, to be reconciled and explained later; and the juxtapositions of coarsely comic with deeply expressive and sometimes tragically painful music.
 - B. Beethoven's piano sonatas capture, as do his symphonies and string quartets, his ongoing compositional development and his evolving views regarding musical expression.
 1. In his early sonatas, we will observe Beethoven's compositional evolution relative to the Classical style that was his artistic inheritance.
 2. Beethoven was a revolutionary man living at a revolutionary time, and he completely believed that music was part of that revolution.
- II. Beethoven's creative life corresponded precisely to the development of the piano from a small, portable, wooden-harped, five-octave keyboard instrument, considered by many to be something of a toy, to the big, heavy, metal-harped instrument with which we are familiar today. The constantly changing technology of the piano affected the way Beethoven thought about, and composed for, the instrument.
 - A. Beethoven was aware of the limitations of the pianos he owned and played, including their limited registral range, limited dynamic range, limited ability to sustain, their relatively quiet tone, and their propensity to turn to kindling under his admittedly heavy touch.
 - B. The piano didn't really begin to replace the harpsichord as the keyboard instrument of choice until the 1760s and 1770s and did not completely replace it until the early 19th century. Both Mozart and Beethoven first learned to play on a harpsichord
 1. The music written for early pianos was only one step removed from harpsichord music; it stressed brilliance but did not call for big sounds, loud attacks, or sustained tones, as we might find, for example, in the piano music of Muzio Clementi and Wolfgang Mozart. (**Musical selection:** Mozart, Piano Sonata in D Major, K. 576 [1789], movement 1, exposition.)
 2. In contrast, we listen to a bit of the third movement of Beethoven's Sonata in F Minor, op. 2, no. 1, completed in 1795. This is vicious music, and it demands a high degree of explosive percussivity and sonority. We hear this movement played on a modern replica of an instrument built in 1795. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata in F Minor, op. 2, no. 1 [1795], movement 3, exposition.)
 3. Clearly, from the beginning, Beethoven demanded volume and power from the "piano" that no one before him had ever imagined.

- III.** The musicologist William Newman has identified 14 pianos that Beethoven owned or borrowed during his lifetime. Once he became famous, Beethoven rarely if ever had to “buy” his own pianos, as piano builders vied with one another to lend him instruments.
- IV.** During this course, we will have the privilege of hearing Claude Frank’s recording of the Beethoven piano sonatas, played on a modern Steinway.
- A.** Claude Frank is among the greatest and most distinguished pianists of his generation. His Beethoven sonatas are spectacular, filled with passion, lyricism, wit, and extraordinary intelligence. When it first appeared in 1971, Frank’s set was hailed by *Time*, *Esquire*, *High Fidelity*, and *The Saturday Review*.
- B.** As mentioned earlier, Maestro Frank performs Beethoven’s piano sonatas on a modern Steinway, an instrument the likes of which Beethoven could only dream about. In closing, let’s make the aural transition from the *fortepianos* we have heard to this point of the lecture to a modern, nine-foot-long, seven-and-a-third-octave Steinway concert grand.
- 1.** We turn to the third and final movement of Beethoven’s Piano Sonata in C Minor, op. 10, no. 1, of 1798. First, we hear the opening of its third movement played on a *fortepiano* built in Vienna in 1815. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata in C Minor, op. 10, no. 1 [1798], movement 3, opening.)
- 2.** Now we hear Claude Frank, playing on a modern Steinway. Note that the modern piano is tuned to a higher pitch than the *fortepiano*. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata in C Minor, p. 10, no. 1 [1798], movement 3, opening.)

Lecture Two

Homage to Mozart

Scope: In this lecture, we will create a historical context for Beethoven and the Classical style he inherited, a musical style brought to a height of perfection by Haydn and Mozart. Next, we will begin a study of the Classical-era musical forms, formal structures that Beethoven first mastered, then increasingly departed from on the road to compositional radicalism. Finally, we will take a look at Beethoven's four-movement Piano Sonata no. 1 in F Minor, op. 2, no. 1 (1795), as both a Classical homage to Mozart and an example of Beethoven's pianistic and compositional audacity, an audacity already apparent in his earliest published works.

Outline

- I. Beethoven was born during the Enlightenment—that mid-18th-century European social and cultural revolution whose impact on musical style was profound. The ornate and intellectually complex music of the High Baroque was rejected as being overly complicated and elitist. A new, more melodically and expressively flexible musical style evolved, one that resonated with the new spirit of individualism that lay at the heart of Enlightenment doctrine.
 - A. The *Classical style*, as it became known, celebrated clarity and beauty of line (melody); balance and purity of form (clear phrase structures and carefully wrought musical forms); and expressive restraint and good taste.
 - B. The Classical style reached its maturity in and around Vienna between roughly 1770 and 1800 in the music of Haydn, Mozart, and other composers. This, so-called *Viennese Classical* style was Beethoven's immediate musical inheritance.
- II. We will explore four essential musical forms in this course. In the order we will encounter them, they are sonata form, minuet and trio/scherzo form, rondo form, and theme and variations form.
 - A. Beethoven first performed his first three piano sonatas (op. 2) sometime during the autumn of 1795. It is significant that the first of these op. 2 sonatas is in the dark, dramatic key of F minor, a statement to the musical world that both the music and its composer should be taken seriously. Three of the four movements of Beethoven's op. 2, no. 1, are in the key of F minor, and three of the four movements are in sonata form.
 1. As an aid to our analysis of op. 2, no. 1, a WordScore Guide™ of this sonata has been provided in this booklet
 2. A sonata form movement has, typically, two principal themes, which are developed, and recapitulated. Such a movement usually consists of four large sections of music: the exposition, the development, the recapitulation, and the coda. The principal themes are presented during the exposition. The first theme, traditionally the more dramatic of the two, is presented in the home key, or *tonic key*, of the movement.
 3. The first theme of a sonata form movement is generally the more dramatic of the themes, and Beethoven's theme 1 is no exception. It is a spare, angular, dramatic melody that consists of two contrasting melodic ideas, or *motives*: an open, bounding, rising *arpeggio* (that is, a chord expressed as a melody), followed by a fast, tight, densely packed embellishment called a *turn*. (**Piano examples.**)
 4. This theme is a clear homage to Mozart, as we hear in comparative selections from the two composers. (**Musical selections:** Beethoven, Piano Sonata in F Minor, op. 2, no. 1 [1795], movement 1, theme 1. Mozart, Symphony in G Minor, K. 183 [1773], movement 1, theme 1. Mozart, Symphony in G Minor, K. 550 [1788], movement 4, theme 1.)
 - B. Beethoven's opening theme, brief as it is, is also a textbook model of phrase structure, phrase attenuation, and phrase liquidation, above and beyond its resemblance to Mozart.
 1. The theme itself is but eight measures long. Those eight measures break down into five extraordinary phrases. Phrase 1 consists of the first two measures—the first statement of the rising arpeggio followed by the tightly wound turn—all outlining the tonic F-minor chord. (**Piano example.**) The second phrase, also two measures long, moves the music of the first phrase up a step in a process called

- sequencing* and, in doing so, outlines a new harmony, the *dominant chord*, the *chord of tension*.
(**Piano example.**)
2. These two opening phrases, the second being a step higher than the first, feature—at the uppermost notes—an ascent from an Ab to a Bb. (**Piano example.**) We expect this upward-reaching line to continue, and it will, but not yet; Beethoven will indulge in some phrase attenuation before the anticipated ascent can continue.
 3. The third phrase is only one measure long and consists only of the closing turn of phrase 1. (**Piano example.**)
 4. The fourth phrase is also one measure long, and it consists of the closing turn of phrase 2. (**Piano example.**) In contracting the opening two 2-measure phrases into two 1-measure phrases, Beethoven is creating an extraordinary sense of compression. The rising Ab–Bb desperately seeks resolution upward and outward! (**Piano example.**)
 5. Phrase 5 is the climax. *Fortissimo* (“very loud”), the pianist’s right hand plays an arpeggiated chord that relates back to the rising “rockets” of phrases 1 and 2, a chord that has as its top note the long-awaited movement upward to a C! (**Piano example.**)
 6. Having achieved that high C—and the resolution back to the tonic chord that supports the C—Beethoven “liquidates” the theme, with a drowsy descent of six notes that dissipates the tension and arrives at, and pauses on, an open cadence. We hear phrase 5 in its entirety. (**Piano example.**)
 7. Just before the melody touches bottom and pauses, Beethoven has inserted a quiet little embellishment of three rising notes. (**Piano example.**) We should recognize the earlier turn, now in *inversion*.
 8. Finally, we hear the theme from the top. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata in F Minor, op. 2, no. 1 [1795], movement 1, theme 1.)
- C. The first theme is followed by a section called the *modulating bridge*, “bridging” the musical space between themes 1 and 2.
1. We perceive this music as a transition, because by its nature, a bridge is built out of various small melodic fragments called *motives*, strung together in such a way as to create momentum without having a powerful thematic personality of its own.
 2. We call this music a *modulating bridge*, because it effects a change of key—the second theme it modulates to will be characterized not only by its own “tune” but also by its own key.
 3. Beethoven’s modulating bridge here consists of three distinct parts. Part 1 sees theme 1 rise out of the bass, sounding, at first, like a continuation of the theme section itself. (**Piano example.**)
 4. Part 2 of the modulating bridge features a modulatory sequence based on the turn of theme 1. (**Piano example.**)
 5. Part 3 features falling scalar fragments in the treble heard against rising fragments in the bass. (**Piano example:** modulating bridge, part 3.)
 6. All three parts of the modulating bridge are “about” a descent from Eb to G, a descent that becomes more explicit and intense as the bridge progresses. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata in F Minor, op. 2, no. 1 [1795], movement 1, modulating bridge.)
 7. We heard that descent of six notes before, at the conclusion of theme 1, in phrase 5. (**Piano example.**)
 8. This descending six-note motive constitutes the essential motivic building block of the entire sonata. As we’ll see throughout this course, Beethoven elevated pure motivic development to a point beyond anything that had existed before him. If Mozart was a sculptor, creating long, gorgeous themes out of a wealth of different motives, then Beethoven was a mosaic artist, forging his singularly compact themes out of the simplest melodic constructs.
- D. The second theme of a sonata form movement will typically be the more lyric theme, although theme 2 in the first movement of Beethoven’s F Minor Sonata is anything but lyric! It consists of three component parts.
1. Part 1 is based on a falling arpeggio (as opposed to the rising arpeggio that began theme 1). This falling arpeggio outlines the dominant chord of the new key of Ab major. Note how certain of the pitches—Fb’s—color and darken the key of Ab major, giving it a minor tinge. (**Piano example.**)
 2. Part 2 of theme 2 consists of a sequence of three-note motives that rises, overall, the distance of six notes! (**Piano example.**)
 3. Part 3 of theme 2 features two long, scalar descents. We now hear theme 2 in its entirety. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata in F Minor, op. 2, no. 1 [1795], movement 1, theme 2.)

- F. Following the appearance of theme 2, *cadential* music (“closing” music) brings the exposition to its conclusion in the new key of Ab major. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata in F Minor, op. 2, no. 1 [1795], movement 1, cadence material.)
- G. In almost all sonata form movements, the exposition is repeated in its entirety to help listeners familiarize themselves with the themes before the extended action sequence that is the development section. We now hear the entire exposition. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata in F Minor, op. 2, no. 1 [1795], movement 1, exposition.)
- H. The development section of a sonata form movement is an extended “action sequence,” in which the themes interact in some way. The only two generalizations we can make about a development section are that, one, it is built from material drawn from the exposition and, two, it is characterized by modulation, that is, change of key.
1. Beethoven’s development section here consists of six parts. In part 1, we hear two 3-measure phrases based on theme 1. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata in F Minor, op. 2, no. 1 [1795], movement 1, development, part 1.)
 2. Parts 2 and 3 of the section feature the falling arpeggio element of theme 2, in part 2 in the treble and in part 3 in the bass. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata in F Minor, op. 2, no. 1 [1795], movement 1, development, parts 2 and 3.)
 3. Part 4 of the development section features a series of syncopated notes that bounce back and forth between the treble and the bass. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata in F Minor, op. 2, no. 1 [1795], movement 1, development, part 4.)
 4. Parts 5 and 6 redirect the harmony back toward F minor in anticipation of the recapitulation. Part 5 is a lengthy passage built on falling two-note motives in the treble heard against a sustained C in the bass. Eight quiet, ticking Cs introduce part 6, in which turns drawn from theme 1 are heard over a bass line that descends toward the tonic pitch of F. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata in F Minor, op. 2, no. 1 [1795], movement 1, development, parts 5 and 6, and recapitulation, theme 1.)
- I. The recapitulation of a sonata form movement sees the themes return in their original order but with a twist: the second theme, heard back in the exposition in its contrasting key, will now be heard—in the recapitulation—in the home key, that is, in the same key as theme 1.
- J. Following the recapitulation, most sonata form movements will feature a *coda*—a section that brings the movement to a conclusion. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata in F Minor, op. 2, no. 1 [1795], movement 1, recapitulation and coda.)
- K. The second movement is a *truncated* sonata form movement in that it has neither a development section nor an exposition repeat. In both its structure and opera-style melodic embellishments, movement 2 of op. 2, no. 1 betrays the influence of Mozart. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata in F Minor, op. 2, no. 1 [1795], movement 2, theme 1.)
- III. The second of the Classical-era musical forms with which we need to be conversant is minuet and trio form. The minuet—a stately, moderately paced three-step dance—is the only Baroque-era dance to survive into the instrumental music of the Classical era.
- A. The Classical-era minuet maintained the moderately paced triple meter of the Baroque model, as well as the large-scale structure of the Baroque model: two contrasting minuets heard back-to-back, followed by a return to the original minuet, creating a large-scale A–B–A structure.
 - B. Over time, the second minuet—section B—came to be known as the *trio*. The return to the opening minuet after the trio—the closing A section of the A–B–A structure—came to be called the *da capo*, meaning, literally, the “back to the top.”
 - C. Beethoven’s third-movement minuet and trio in the F Minor Sonata is a brilliant example of the same sort of rhythmic manipulation, motive-driven themes, and thematic fragmentation and reconfiguration that will characterize his mature compositions.
 1. Beethoven’s opening minuet theme is built from a three-note motive that begins on the upbeat, that is, the third and final beat of each measure. We hear this in a demonstration that separates the three-note motives from each other. (**Piano example.**)
 2. The action of the minuet intensifies as the three-note motives increasingly connect into larger, six-note motives, which are, in turn, followed by two cadence units that bring the first large phrase of the

- minuet to its conclusion. We hear the minuet from the beginning. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata in F Minor, op. 2, no. 1 [1795], movement 3, minuet, phrase a.)
3. The second phrase of the minuet is a virtual development section! The three-note motive is fragmented into a series of interlocking two-note motives that modulate toward, and cadence in, the new key of Bb minor. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata in F Minor, op. 2, no. 1 [1795], movement 3, minuet, phrase b.)
 4. The cadence unit is repeated, then reduced to a three-note unit. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata in F Minor, op. 2, no. 1 [1795], movement 3, minuet, phrase b.)
 5. This reduced, three-note cadence unit is suddenly used to spin out a violent descending passage that powers the minuet toward its final phrase. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata in F Minor, op. 2, no. 1 [1795], movement 3, minuet, phrase b.)
 6. The final phrase of the minuet—a¹—sees a further intensification of the opening thematic material via imitation between the bass and treble and a series of boldly descending trills, before the energy is allowed to dissipate and the minuet comes to its conclusion. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata in F Minor, op. 2, no. 1 [1795], movement 3, minuet, phrase a¹.)
- D. The trio features an engaging, vaguely rustic, fiddle-style tune that, despite its sunny disposition, is drawn directly from the violent, descending passage that powered the minuet to its conclusion (and was itself a product of the three-note reduction of the cadential unit that was a direct outgrowth of the opening minuet theme!) A back-to-back comparison is called for. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata in F Minor, op. 2, no. 1 [1795], movement 3, minuet, phrase b and trio, phrase c.)
- IV. The fourth movement of Beethoven’s Piano Sonata, op. 2, no. 1 is dark and explosive, filled with hammered chords, rippling arpeggios, and extreme contrasts of mood and dynamics.
- A. Pianistically, this movement is, for Beethoven, the “music of the future,” because in 1795, the *fortepiano* could not realize or reproduce the dynamic and expressive extremes called for in this score.
 - B. In lieu of a traditional development section, Beethoven introduces an entirely new theme, a charming, gracious, thoroughly “Viennese” tune that contrasts mightily with the fire and angst of the exposition.
 - C. We hear the recapitulation and conclusion of this remarkable sonata. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata in F Minor, op. 2, no. 1 [1795], movement 4, recapitulation.)
 - D. As we progress through the sonatas, we will see how Beethoven, contrary to the convention of his day, invests increasing dramatic weight and importance in his last movements
- V. Beethoven’s F Minor Sonata is an “angular” sounding work. So much of the writing is a bare-bones, two-part texture that the sonata gives an almost “minimalist” impression. There is, simply, not a wasted note in the piece. Likewise, there are few if any moments of “prettiness” for its own sake.

Lecture Three

The Grand Sonata, Part 1

Scope: Unlike many other major composers, Beethoven did not have to waste time early in his career composing in a “popular” style. This freedom allowed him to experiment to a degree that few composers of his time enjoyed. He was supported financially by a group of Viennese aristocrats and did not have to travel or give large public performances. Indeed, he was considered a pianist and composer for the connoisseur, and his patrons encouraged his exploration of artistically novel ideas. Not all composers could thrive in such an environment, but as we will see in this lecture’s examination of the Piano Sonata in A Major, Beethoven most assuredly did.

Outline

- I. Like the Piano Sonata no. 1 in F Minor, the Sonata no. 2 in A Major is a four-movement composition, which was an innovation in 1795.
- II. We begin with movement 1 of the Piano Sonata in A Major, in sonata form.
 - A. Theme 1 consists of three component phrases. The first phrase features a series of lightly descending octaves and short, descending runs, all of which are played in unison by the pianist’s two hands, creating an almost comic effect. (**Musical selection:** Sonata no. 2 in A Major, op. 2, no. 2 [1795], movement 1, theme 1, phrase 1.)
 - B. With the beginning of the second phrase, the theme abruptly changes direction, as a rising sixteenth-note triplet blasts the melody upward. This second phrase features a series of imitative entries, which give the distinct impression of ever more melodic lines joining in, an effect that contrasts completely with the unison presentation of the first phrase. (**Musical selection:** Sonata no. 2 in A Major, op. 2, no. 2 [1795], movement 1, theme 1, phrases 1 and 2.)
 - C. The third phrase brings together elements of both phrases 1 and 2, and it concludes with a closed cadence, the harmonic equivalent of a period. (**Musical selection:** Sonata no. 2 in A Major, op. 2, no. 2 [1795], movement 1, theme 1.)
 - D. The modulating bridge begins with an imitative version of the rising sixteenth-note triplet that initiated the second phrase of theme 1. This is brilliant, joyful music, though soon, the momentum flags and the harmonic palette darkens with the approach of theme 2. (**Musical selection:** Sonata no. 2 in A Major, op. 2, no. 2 [1795], movement 1, modulating bridge.)
 - E. What follows is extraordinary, even revolutionary: not only does Beethoven not begin the second theme in the “correct” key, but he modulates through an entire series of key areas during the course of theme 2, only arriving in the “proper” key (in this case, E major) at the end of the theme.
 - F. To understand Beethoven’s innovation here, we must pause to discuss key, tonality, and the harmonic expectations of Classicism.
- III. No musical issue is more difficult to demonstrate to the untrained ear than the issue of *key*, which refers to tonality, that is, the “main” pitch, the tonal center, or *tonic*, in a given section of tonal music.
 - A. At its essence, the tonal system is about complementary opposites, extremes that balance each other. At the heart of the tonal system are two pitches, and the harmonies, or *chords*, built on top of those pitches. In any given key, one of those pitches and harmonies represents rest and the other represents tension in search of rest.
 - B. If we say that we are in the key of C, it means that we perceive the pitch C as being the tonal center, or the *tonic pitch*, and that we perceive the chord built atop the pitch C as the *tonic chord*. (**Piano example.**)
 1. In the key of C, the pitch C and the chord built above it represent rest and repose. Of course, these words have meaning only relative to tension. The so-called *pitch and chord of tension*—the polar opposite—is the pitch and harmony that lies a perfect fifth above a given tonic note; in the key of C, that would be a G. (**Piano example.**)

2. In the key of C, the pitch G is called the *dominant pitch*. The chord built on a G is called the *dominant chord*, or the *chord of tension*. By definition, a dominant chord is a dissonance, as it seeks repose by resolving to its tonic, in this case, to a C chord. **(Piano example.)**
- C. Obviously, there is more to the tonal harmonic system than just rest and tension, although, at its most basic level, that is what the system is about. **(Piano example.)**
1. We can easily expand the length of the phrase just played (the *harmonic progression*) by inserting other chords between the tonic and dominant chords; these are called *sub-* or *pre-dominant chords*. We hear this expansion in the following examples. **(Piano examples.)**
 2. These progressions all represent departure and return, movement away from rest, toward tension, and back to rest. Further, these examples all represent local departure and return, in that they were in the key of C throughout.
 3. It is also possible to effect a much larger-scale departure and return, a departure from the key of C entirely. This is a process called *modulation*, in which the harmony transits to an entirely new key. For example, let's listen to a transit from the key of C to the key of A minor. **(Piano example.)**
- D. The listener should not expect to consciously follow key changes. The interest lies in the cumulative effect of the modulation—one of large-scale departure and return. Without modulation, the music would seem frozen and immobile; properly used, modulation enables a movement to soar through harmonic space, propelled by subtle use of local and large-scale harmonic departure and return, tension and release.
- E. Another important harmonic topic to understand is the issue of cadence.
1. When a musical phrase ends on the tonic chord, we say that we have encountered a *closed cadence*. A *cadence* is a musical punctuation mark, and a *closed cadence*—with its palpable sense of resolution and rest—is the musical equivalent to a period in written language. **(Piano example.)**
 2. Conversely, an *open cadence* is one that gets hung up on the dominant chord, the chord of tension. Like a comma in the middle of a sentence, an open cadence creates tension, which forces the music to continue in search of resolution. **(Piano examples.)**
 3. There is also a type of cadence called a *deceptive*, or *false, cadence*, which we'll define and discuss when we encounter it.
- F. In discussing the arrival of theme 2 during the exposition of the first movement of the A Major Piano Sonata, we noted that Beethoven does not begin the second theme in the “correct” key but modulates through an entire series of key areas, arriving in the “proper” key only at the end of theme 2.
1. One of the essential aspects of sonata form is that in the exposition, theme 2 will be heard in its own key, a key different from that of theme 1.
 2. One of the expectations of sonata form is that if theme 1 is in major, then theme 2 will be in the major key of the dominant; in the case of a movement that began in A major, theme 2 would be expected to be in the key of E major.
 3. In Beethoven's A Major Piano Sonata, theme 2 begins in the key of E minor. As theme 2 progresses, the bass line slowly rises over an octave as the harmony modulates through a series of different keys—E minor, G major, G minor, Bb major, D major, F# minor—before finally arriving in the expected key of E major at the end of the theme. **(Musical selection: Sonata no. 2 in A Major, op. 2, no. 2 [1795], movement 1, theme 2.)**
 4. Let's also hear the cadence material, which begins with the same imitative sixteenth-note music that initiated the modulating bridge, through to the closed cadence that concludes the exposition. **(Musical selection: Sonata no. 2 in A Major, op. 2, no. 2 [1795], movement 1, cadence material.)**
- G. Note that at just the moment theme 2 finally arrives in E major, Beethoven writes a couple of broken-octave arpeggios—the first falling, the second rising—to celebrate that arrival. **(Musical selection: Sonata no. 2 in A Major, op. 2, no. 2 [1795], movement 1, theme 2, octave arpeggios.)**
- H. We now hear the entire exposition. **(Musical selection: Sonata no. 2 in A Major, op. 2, no. 2 [1795], movement 1, exposition.)**
- IV. The second movement of the Piano Sonata in A Major—marked *largo appassionato* (“very slowly and passionately”)—is in rondo form.
- A. *Rondo* is a musical form in which the opening theme, the *rondo theme*, returns periodically, like a refrain, after various contrasting episodes. Even more important than the form of Beethoven's second, slow

movement here, however, is its mood and spirit. As one writer notes, this movement is “the first of those noble areas which...embrace the heart of his [Beethoven’s] humanistically religious experience” (Wilfrid Mellers, 41).

- B. Despite the fact that the movement is in triple meter, the music does have the feel of a solemn, religious processional. The rondo theme itself features the melodic motion and limited range we associate with plainchant and religious hymns, and the bass line has the steady gait of a slow march. (**Musical selection:** Sonata no. 2 in A Major, op. 2, no. 2 [1795], movement 2, rondo theme.)
- V. In lieu of the “expected” designation of “minuet and trio,” Beethoven called his third movement a “scherzo.”
- A. *Scherzo* comes from the Italian verb *scherzare* (“to joke”) and means, literally, “I’m joking.” It’s a designation Haydn used for the fast and playful minuet and trio movements in his op. 33 string quartets of 1781.
 - B. Like a minuet and trio, a Beethoven scherzo is typically a large-scale three-part form, A–B–A, scherzo–trio–scherzo–da capo. And like a minuet and trio, a Beethoven scherzo is usually in triple meter. However, Beethoven’s *scherzi* are typically fast to very fast in tempo and bear no resemblance to the moderately paced minuet dances from which they evolved.
 - C. Neither does Beethoven, in his *scherzi*, slavishly follow the phrase structure and ritual repetitions that are intrinsic to minuet and trio form. Let’s hear the opening scherzo section in its entirety. It is dominated by an arpeggio-like figure that Beethoven has indicated should be played *leggiero*—“smoothly.” (**Piano example.**)
 - D. That tiny motive is the essential building block of the entire scherzo. It’s typical of Beethoven’s *scherzi* that they are based on the shortest, tightest musical ideas imaginable. (**Musical selection:** Sonata no. 2 in A Major, op. 2, no. 2 [1795], movement 3, scherzo.)
- VI. Program annotators often refer to the fourth movement of the Piano Sonata in A Major as “perhaps the most Mozartean movement in all of the Beethoven piano sonatas.”
- A. The movement certainly displays a lightness and melodic grace that show us that Beethoven had mastered the Classical style to a degree matched only by Haydn and Mozart. But we see in the details that this music is uniquely Beethoven’s.
 - B. The rondo theme—theme A—begins with a rapid, rising arpeggio that spans three-and-a-half octaves. This rising gesture is a version of the sixteenth-note triplet that blasted the second part of theme 1, movement 1, upward. Here, it not so much blasts as nudges an otherwise shy and restrained theme into action. (**Musical selection:** Sonata no. 2 in A Major, op. 2, no. 2 [1795], movement 4, rondo theme.)
 - C. The first contrasting episode—section B if we were to schematicize the movement—begins with a transitional passage in running sixteenth notes, then introduces a theme of its own—theme B—in the new key of E major. (**Musical selection:** Sonata no. 2 in A Major, op. 2, no. 2 [1795], movement 4, first contrasting episode.)
 - D. The rondo theme returns, although the rising arpeggio has been widened, from three-and-a-half to four-and-a-half octaves, and the theme has been embellished. The second contrasting episode that follows—section C—is in A minor. It’s aggressive and militant in tone and features staccato scales and punchy chords. (**Musical selection:** Sonata no. 2 in A Major, op. 2, no. 2 [1795], movement 4, A¹ and C.)
 - E. The rising arpeggio that introduces the next restatement of the rondo theme is now expanded into a four-and-a-half-octave scale, one that consists of 32 notes and takes an entire measure to play! (**Musical selection:** Sonata no. 2 in A Major, op. 2, no. 2 [1795], movement 4, A² and B¹.)
 - F. The job of a coda is to create a convincing sense of conclusion. Classical codas were generally short and to the point, but that is not true of Beethoven’s codas.
 - 1. The coda in the fourth-movement rondo of the A Major Piano Sonata takes up a full quarter of the movement and is a development section coming at the end of the rondo!
 - 2. This lengthy coda integrates the three essential thematic elements of the movement—the rondo theme (A), theme B, and the A minor material of section C—thematic elements that had, up to this point of the movement, all been presented separately.

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3. The coda demonstrates that, even early in his career, Beethoven will use Classical-era formal expectations only to the point where they serve his expressive needs. (**Musical selection:** Sonata no. 2 in A Major, op. 2, no. 2 [1795], movement 4, coda.)

Lecture Four

The Grand Sonata, Part 2

Scope: In this lecture, we closely examine the Piano Sonata in C Major, op. 2, no. 3, composed in 1795, a work that is orchestral in conception, a veritable “concerto” for solo piano. We follow that with a brief look at the Piano Sonata no. 4 in Eb Major, published two years later, in 1797. In both these works, we see Beethoven’s early artistic declaration that he was not interested in slavishly following the Classical tradition.

Outline

- I. Movement 1 of the Piano Sonata in C Major is in sonata form.
 - A. Theme 1 is presented quietly and intimately and gives no hint of the explosive, virtuosic music to come. As usual with Beethoven, the essential motivic material that generates the theme is laid out in the first measures of the theme, with a minimum of fuss and flash. (**Piano example.**)
 1. The basic motive is an “olly-olly-umphry” construct consisting of four trill-like sixteenth notes, followed by two eighth notes. (**Piano example.**)
 2. Let’s hear theme 1 in its entirety, ending with an open cadence. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 3 in C Major, op. 2, no. 3 [1795], movement 1, theme 1.)
 - B. With the beginning of the modulating bridge, the nature of the music changes significantly. Fortissimo broken octaves tear up and down the piano keyboard, followed by a rippling tune that ends with a descending scale in the new key of G major and a pause. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 3 in C Major, op. 2, no. 3 [1795], movement 1, modulating bridge, part 1.)
 - C. We would now seem to be primed for theme 2 in the “correct” new key of G major. What we get, instead, is a dark, sinuous tune in the unexpected key of G minor, and this tune soon modulates away from G minor to A minor. Eventually, we realize that this dark, unexpectedly dramatic music is actually part of the modulating bridge. Let’s hear the entire modulating bridge, from the fortissimo broken octaves through the quiet, single line that introduces, finally, the real theme 2! (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 3 in C Major, op. 2, no. 3 [1795], movement 1, modulating bridge.)
 - D. Theme 2 is a luscious theme in G major, presented as a dialogue between treble and bass. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 3 in C Major, op. 2, no. 3 [1795], movement 1, theme 2.)
 - E. The cadence material follows immediately. The explosive, virtuosic broken octaves that initiated the modulating bridge resume, followed by a hammered descent and a series of upward-rippling arpeggios. A closed cadence leads to a brief cadence theme characterized by a trill. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 3 in C Major, op. 2, no. 3 [1795], movement 1, cadence theme.)
 - F. This brief cadence is followed by a rising/falling scale in broken octaves and, finally, a closed cadence that concludes the exposition. We listen to the cadence material in its entirety. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 3 in C Major, op. 2, no. 3 [1795], movement 1, cadence material.)
 - G. This exposition is amazing! The themes themselves are relatively quiet in their expressive content and impact, but the transitional and cadential music is explosive. If this sonata were indeed a concerto, these transitional and cadential sections of music would have been played by the orchestra and the themes, by the solo piano.
 1. This difference between “solo” music and “orchestral” music is made explicit by Beethoven’s use of dynamic contrast: the “soloistic” passages are marked *piano* and the “orchestral” passages, *fortissimo*.
 2. The implicit concerto references of the exposition become explicit during the development section and the recapitulation.
 - H. The development section is in four parts. Part 1 features the cadence theme and a good deal of modulation as the harmony transits from G major to Bb major. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 3 in C Major, op. 2, no. 3 [1795], movement 1, development part 1.)
 1. Part 2 of the development features a series of brilliant arpeggios, just the sort of flashy music we would expect in the development section of a concerto. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 3 in C Major, op. 2, no. 3 [1795], movement 1, development part 2.)

2. Theme 1 quietly begins in part 3 of the development section, in D major. Within moments, the music veers away from D major in a lengthy, loud, highly modulatory passage that finally quiets down with the arrival on the dominant chord of C major.
 3. Part 4 of the development section spins out the earlier “olly-olly-umphrey” motive over a sustained G in the bass, from which theme 1, now in C major, emerges effortlessly as the recapitulation begins. We’ll listen to parts 3 and 4 of the development section through theme 1 in the recapitulation, beginning with the statement of theme 1 in D major that begins part 3 of the development. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 3 in C Major, op. 2, no. 3 [1795], movement 1, development parts 3 and 4 and recapitulation, theme 1.)
- I. The recapitulation proceeds almost as expected until the cadence material. As in the exposition, the cadence material begins with a passage in broken octaves, followed by the hammered descent, the upward-rippling arpeggios, and the cadence theme. We rejoin the movement at that point, with the cadence theme. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 3 in C Major, op. 2, no. 3 [1795], movement 1, cadence theme.)
1. The cadence theme concludes, there, on an open cadence. We expect it to resolve to a C major chord, but it doesn’t. Instead, by way of a deceptive cadence, we are swept into the distant and unexpected key of Ab major.
 2. A *deceptive, or false, cadence* is one in which the dominant chord does resolve but not to the tonic chord. We hear first an open cadence. (**Piano example.**)
 3. We now hear that cadence closed by resolving to the tonic. (**Piano example.**)
 4. We now transform that into a deceptive cadence. (**Piano example.**)
 5. Deceptive cadences must be used sparingly, but they can create an extraordinary effect. Here, Beethoven thrusts the harmony into a completely unexpected place, and a long, tortuous series of dissonant harmonies—played as arpeggios—slowly trace their way back toward C major. Let’s listen from the beginning of the cadence theme through the deceptive cadence and the trip back to C major! (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 3 in C Major, op. 2, no. 3 [1795], movement 1, cadence theme and cadential 6/4.)
 6. That final chord is called a *cadential 6/4 chord*. It’s the type of chord that would, in a concerto, initiate the *cadenza*, the moment when the soloist breaks free of the orchestra and flies alone. Here, Beethoven has written a *cadenza* for the piano! During this “*cadenza*,” we’ll hear lots of “olly-olly-umphrey” motives until the *cadenza* concludes with a trill.
 7. Theme 1 then returns one last time; hammered chords lead to one last rising/falling fortissimo scale in broken octaves, and the movement ends. Let’s listen from the cadential 6/4 chord: the *cadenza* followed by the conclusion of the movement. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 3 in C Major, op. 2, no. 3 [1795], movement 1, *cadenza* and conclusion.)
- II. The second movement *adagio* is in the distant key of E major. Before we look at this movement, we need to add to our music-theory vocabulary.
- A. The issue of closely and distantly related keys, and how one transits from one key to another, lies at the heart of Beethoven’s harmonic invention. Two keys that are *closely related* share most of their pitches in common. In the case of C major—the tonic key of Beethoven’s Piano Sonata op. 2, no. 3—the closely related keys are G major (which lies a perfect fifth above C major); F major (which lies a perfect fifth below C major); and A minor.
 - B. Let’s compare the pitch content of these closely related keys.
 1. The key of C major consists of seven pitches—C, D, E, F, G, A, and B—all of which appear as white notes on a piano keyboard.
 2. G major has six pitches in common with C major, the only different pitch being an F# (as opposed to an F natural in C major).
 3. The key of F major also has six pitches in common with C major, the only different pitch being a Bb (as opposed to a B natural in C major).
 4. A minor, in its basic form, has the same seven pitches as C major.
 - C. Traditionally, the middle movements of a Classical-era composition were set in either the tonic key or in one of the closely related keys. Therefore, if the outer movements of a piece were set in C major—as in the case of Beethoven’s Piano Sonata op. 2, no. 3—then we would expect the middle movements to be set in C major or in G major, F major, or A minor—one of the closely related keys of C major.

- D. The second movement of op. 2, no. 3, is in the key of E major, which shares only three pitches in common with C major. C major and E major are not closely related keys; in fact, because they have so few pitches in common, they are called *distantly related keys*. But the distance between C major and E major doesn't concern Beethoven, because he sees them as connected by a *pivot third*.
 - E. The all-important middle pitch of a C major chord, located three pitches (or a *third*) above the C, is an E. For Beethoven, moving between the distant keys of C major and E major is as fast and easy as pivoting on the E from a C major chord to an E major chord. (**Piano example**.)
 - F. Increasingly, Beethoven came to prefer modulations and key relationship a third apart—that is, between distantly related keys—at the expense of key relationships a fifth apart—that is, between closely related keys.
 - G. We now hear the rondo theme that begins the second movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata in C major, op. 2, no. 3, a movement set in E major! (**Musical selection**: Piano Sonata no. 3 in C Major, op. 2, no. 3 [1795], movement 2, rondo theme.)
- III. The third movement scherzo theme is based on the first movement's "olly-olly-umphrey" motive. (**Piano example**.)
- A. Let's hear this delightful scherzo in C major, so typical of Beethoven's scherzi, with its emphasis on a single, brief motive. (**Musical selection**: Piano Sonata no. 3 in C Major, op. 2, no. 3 [1795], movement 3, scherzo theme.)
 - B. The trio section is set in the closely related key of A minor. (**Musical selection**: Piano Sonata no. 3 in C Major, op. 2, no. 3 [1795], movement 3, trio.)
- IV. The lightness and whimsy of the fourth movement offers a perfect complement to the thunderous first movement, although the technical demands of the fourth movement are greater even than those of the first!
- A. The rondo theme here consists of a series of rapidly rising chords and some extremely fast passagework, all of which must be played with a deftness and delicacy that make the music sound effortless. (**Musical selection**: Piano Sonata no. 3 in C Major, op. 2, no. 3 [1795], movement 4, rondo theme.)
 - B. As we listen to the final two minutes of this five-minute rondo, we will hear the rondo theme—A—followed by a reprise of the first contrasting episode—B—followed by one last statement of the rondo theme and the conclusion of the movement.
 1. Be particularly aware of the last appearance of the rondo theme, which begins 1 minute, 16 seconds, into the excerpt.
 2. It begins with the rondo theme in the bass, underneath a long trill in the treble. The music that follows, with its cadential 6/4 chord and trills, sounds like yet another concerto cadenza.
 3. A long pause follows the last of these trills, and when the music resumes, it does so in the distant key of A major. A couple of pauses and phrases later, the movement ends, having reestablished C major at virtually the last second. (**Musical selection**: Piano Sonata no. 3 in C Major, op. 2, no. 3 [1795], movement 4, conclusion.)
- V. Beethoven's Piano Sonata no. 4 in Eb Major is the "grandest" and most ambitious of his first four piano sonatas. Everything about the piece is "big"—its virtuosity, its expressive scope, and its length: at 30 minutes, of all Beethoven's piano sonatas, it's second only to the Piano Sonata op. 106 of 1818 (*Hammerklavier*).
- A. Our goal in examining this sonata will be to observe and appreciate its tremendous expressive and temporal scope, with the understanding that if we had time, we could spend days examining its motivic connections and harmonic usage, its contextual approach to musical form, and so forth.
 - B. Nowhere is the broad conception of the Sonata in Eb Major, op. 7, more clearly expressed than in the first four measures of the first-movement introduction. These measures are based entirely on a tonic Eb major chord.
 1. The treble features a series of four Eb major chords that, overall, push upward toward the beginning of theme 1. These chords are a structural upbeat, an anticipation of action. (**Piano example**.)
 2. At the same time, the left hand is playing a throbbing Eb in eighth-note triplets, creating a powerful rhythmic thrust in this otherwise harmonically static introductory passage. (**Piano example**.)

3. The static harmonic underpinning of this introduction tells us that this movement is conceived in broad strokes, on a large scale, and that it will unwind slowly. The themes have a more songlike character than anything we heard in the op. 2 sonatas, and this contributes to the leisurely, lyric sensibility of this movement. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 4 in Eb Major, op. 7 [1797], movement 1, introduction and theme 1.)
 4. Next, let's hear the opening of theme 2. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 4 in Eb Major, op. 7 [1797], movement 1, theme 2.)
 5. Now we hear the entire exposition: music of great lyricism, spaciousness, and drama, driven by the throbbing, almost continuous eighth-note triplets. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 4 in Eb Major, op. 7 [1797], movement 1, exposition.)
- C.** The second movement of this sonata is in ternary form (A–B–A plus a coda) and marked *Largo, con gran espressione*, “slowly, and with great expression.” (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 4 in Eb Major, op. 7 [1797], movement 2, hymn [A].)
- D.** Beethoven simply calls the third movement *allegro*, which means “fast”; it is a three-part, A–B–A form movement and has been referred to as a minuet, a scherzo, and even a lyric intermezzo.
1. Certainly, the opening section has the lilt and lyricism of a minuet (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 4 in Eb Major, op. 7 [1797], movement 3, scherzo opening.)
 2. In the B section—the trio—the movement betrays its modernity and its relationship to the first two movements. The trio, which is in minor, is all about tone color and atmosphere: rapid eighth-note triplets create a buzzing, harmonic blur of sound. The thematic melody is embedded in these triplets, and as in the first movement, the effect here is of great rhythmic momentum driving music of relative harmonic stasis. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 4 in Eb Major, op. 7 [1797], movement 3, trio.)
- E.** The fourth movement is a graceful and elegant rondo. Note that the rondo theme is accompanied by continuous repeated notes similar to those that characterized the first-movement introduction. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 4 in Eb Major, op. 7 [1797], movement 4, rondo theme.)
1. We will listen to just the coda of this movement and the harmonic sleight-of-hand Beethoven uses to get into the coda. The movement is rolling toward its conclusion and comes to rest on an octave Bb, the dominant pitch of tonic Eb major. (**Piano example.**)
 2. We expect the Bb to resolve to Eb, but it doesn't; instead, it moves up a half step to a B natural, and we find that we have moved to the distantly related key of B major. (**Piano example.**)
 3. Beethoven stays in B major for seven measures, after which he slides back to Eb major and brings the movement—and the sonata—to a strumming and leisurely conclusion. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 4 in Eb major, op. 7 [1797], movement 4, coda.)

Lecture Five

Meaning and Metaphor

Scope: In his set of three piano sonatas published as op. 10, Beethoven did exactly what he had done in 1795 with the three piano sonatas published as op. 2. Like op. 2, op. 10 begins with a piano sonata in minor. op. 10 also features a witty and upbeat second sonata and ends with the most virtuosic sonata of the set. The formula of dark passion to witty to grand worked well for op. 2, and it works equally well for op. 10. This long-range, cathartic journey from minor-key darkness to grandiose, major-key brilliance became something of an expressive trademark for Beethoven and may be a reflection of his own need to overcome demons, real or imagined. Increasingly, Beethoven's need to express himself led to the creation of a body of music that meant something above and beyond just the notes, the rhythms, and the harmonies. As we shall see in this lecture, this issue of meaning and metaphor, so intrinsic to Beethoven's mature, "heroic," post-1803 music, begins to rear its head even in his earlier music in his use of unprecedented long-range tonal schemes.

Outline

- I. Beethoven believed that music had the power to create meaning and experience beyond the ability of words to explain or visual images to illustrate—the power to reveal truths that could not be understood through intellect alone and the power to depict the sublime. His was a personal, semi-mystical, 19th-century, Romantic-era view of music, and one of the catalysts for it was his progressive hearing loss.
 - A. By 1798, Beethoven was suffering from the incremental loss of high-frequency hearing in both ears. The spiritual and emotional damage the hearing loss inflicted on Beethoven's already scarred psyche was inestimable.
 - B. Between 1798 and 1802, he became increasingly angry and depressed over his hearing loss, yet these were highly productive and creative years for the composer. During that time, Beethoven composed the 14 piano sonatas that comprise op. 10 through op. 31, along with six string quartets, five violin and piano sonatas, the First and Second Symphonies, and other works. Beethoven's encroaching deafness provides the necessary backdrop for his next 14 piano sonatas, written between 1798 and his "breakthrough year" of 1803.
- II. The Piano Sonata no. 5 in C Minor, op. 10, no. 1, is in three movements. C minor was Beethoven's tragic key of choice, and more than any other key, it is C minor that has come to most represent his artistic character: heroic, impulsive, and tragic.
 - A. This sort of "key favoritism" was not the result of some random whim on Beethoven's part. The *well-tempered* tuning system of Beethoven's day was slightly different from the *equal-tempered* system that became universal in the decades after his death.
 1. In Beethoven's day, there were slight differences between certain keys that would be perceived as representing shades of darkness (for minor keys) and shades of brightness (for major keys).
 2. Beethoven felt an emotional edge, a darkness, in C minor that inspired him to compose some of his most expressively compelling works in that key, including the Piano Sonata no. 5, op. 10, no. 1.
 - B. The first movement of the op. 10, no. 1, is described in the literature as being "passionate." What musical markers does Beethoven use that bring us to the interpretation of this music as being passionate? This question cuts directly to the issue of meaning in Beethoven's music. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 5 in C Minor, op. 10, no. 1 [1798], movement 1, theme 1.)
 1. The first thing that strikes us about this theme is the rhetorical nature of the music. That is, we're not hearing a "tune" with a distinct beginning, middle, and end but, rather, a "thematic entity" filled with rhythmic propulsion, abrupt silences, and sudden changes of dynamic, all of it informed by the dark-tinted tonality of C minor.
 2. As we listen to theme 1 again, note that it seems more like a series of different musical gestures in the key of C minor, rather than a theme. These gestures collectively create a mood of breathless, impetuous passion. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 5 in C Minor, op. 10, no. 1 [1798], movement 1, theme 1.)

3. This theme consists of four large phrases. The first phrase is characterized by loud, upward-leaping, dotted-rhythm (that is, short-long) arpeggios that alternate with quiet, anxious cadential motives. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 5 in C Minor, op. 10, no. 1 [1798], movement 1, theme 1, phrase 1.)
 4. In the second phrase of the theme, the quiet anxiety that punctuated phrase 1 becomes mournful, as we hear a series of three weeping, descending gestures. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 5 in C Minor, op. 10, no. 1 [1798], movement 1, theme 1, phrase 2.)
 5. The third phrase of this opening theme also consists of three elements: two hushed, dissonant cadential motives, followed by a third violent motive. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 5 in C Minor, op. 10, no. 1 [1798], movement 1, theme 1, phrase 3.)
 6. The fourth thematic phrase is a reprise of the first, consisting now of three vicious, rising, dotted-rhythm arpeggios only, without the “softening” element that had earlier been provided by the quiet, anxious cadential motives. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 5 in C Minor, op. 10, no. 1 [1798], movement 1, theme 1, phrase 4.)
 7. Finally, we hear all of theme 1. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 5 in C Minor, op. 10, no. 1 [1798], movement 1, theme 1.)
- C. What comes next is completely unexpected. After a full measure of silence, a tender, melancholy tune quietly unwinds in the key of Ab major. This is not theme 2 but the modulating bridge, which begins in Ab major and ends in Eb major, the “proper” and “expected” key of theme 2. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 5 in C Minor, op. 10, no. 1 [1798], movement 1, modulating bridge.)
- D. Theme 2 is a lyric, passionate, skittering tune filled with youthful energy. The cadence material begins with a brief reference to theme 1, before a gentle closing theme—drawn from the modulating bridge—brings the exposition to its conclusion. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 5 in C Minor, op. 10, no. 1 [1798], movement 1, theme 2 and cadence material.)
- E. As we listen to the entire exposition, be aware of the extraordinary degree of contrast of musical events and the tremendous compression of events. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 5 in C Minor, op. 10, no. 1 [1798], movement 1, exposition.)
- F. The development section begins with a modulatory passage based on the opening of theme 1. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 5 in C Minor, op. 10, no. 1 [1798], movement 1, development, part 1.)
1. Next, Beethoven introduces an entirely new theme that takes up the remainder of the development section.
 2. This new theme is in F minor, and expressively, it stands halfway between themes 1 and 2: it has the dark tone of theme 1 but the long-lined lyricism of theme 2. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 5 in C Minor, op. 10, no. 1 [1798], movement 1, development, new theme.)
- G. The recapitulation begins and, at first, proceeds as expected: recapitulation, theme 1: phrases 1, 2, and 3. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 5 in C Minor, op. 10, no. 1 [1798], movement 1, recapitulation, theme 1.)
1. Where is the violent fourth phrase of theme 1? The answer is that here in the recapitulation, there is no fourth phrase of the theme; theme 1 simply ends, with an abruptness calculated to startle and confuse.
 2. Once again, our expectations have been stymied, and after a seemingly endless pause of nearly two measures, the tender and melancholy modulating bridge music begins in the distant key of Gb major!
 3. Recall how the third phrase of theme 1 ended in the exposition. (**Piano example.**) Recall, too, how phrase 3 ends in the recapitulation. (**Piano example.**)
 4. During the exposition, phrase 3 ended with a full C minor chord. (**Piano example.**) In the recapitulation, phrase 3 ends not with a full chord but, simply, with octave C’s. (**Piano example.**)
 5. By removing the inner chord tones and leaving only the octave C’s, Beethoven has “liberated” these C’s from the key of C minor; suspended there, they can be reinterpreted as belonging to any chord that contains a C. One such chord containing a C is an Ab dominant seventh chord. (**Piano example.**)
 6. If we reinterpret the hanging octave C’s as belonging to that Ab chord, then those C’s will tend to resolve upward a half step to a Db, which is exactly what Beethoven does. (**Piano example.**)
 7. This Db could now be reinterpreted as the dominant note of the key of Gb major. (**Piano example.**) Indeed, Beethoven does just that—moving rapidly from C minor to Gb major.

8. And the surprises don't end there. As the modulating bridge in the recapitulation wends its way to theme 2, it modulates—not to C minor, where theme 2 is supposed to be, but to F major, another completely unexpected turn of harmonic events. We listen from phrase 3 of theme 1 through the modulating bridge. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 5 in C Minor, op. 10, no. 1 [1798], movement 1, recapitulation, theme 1, phrase 3, modulating bridge.)
 9. Theme 2—now heard in F major—would seem to be immune from the darker expressive elements of the movement. But soon enough, the harmony modulates to where, according to the “rules,” it was supposed to have been all along—to C minor—and theme 2 is heard again in its entirety, now in the dark-toned key of C minor. The cadence material and an explosive closing cadence follow. Beethoven opts not to provide a coda for this movement, so it ends abruptly, powerfully, passionately! (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 5 in C Minor, op. 10, no. 1 [1798], movement 1, recapitulation, theme 2 to end.)
- III. Like the second movement of the Piano Sonata in F Minor, op. 2, no. 1, the second movement of op. 10, no. 1, is a *truncated sonata form*. It follows the structural outlines of the outer sections of an operatic *da capo aria*, meaning a sonata form without a development section.
- A. This is one of the last slow movements in which Beethoven will use the operatic-style ornamentation that was traditional for an *adagio*.
 - B. As we listen to the entire exposition, be aware of the seamless, operatic, Mozartean lyricism of this excerpt, keeping in mind that Beethoven will soon abandon this sort of lyric, slow movement in favor of more stark and expressively “heavy” slow movements. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 5 in C Minor, op. 10, no. 1 [1798], movement 2, exposition.)
- IV. The third and final movement of op. 10, no. 1, is as jagged and violent as the first and, in terms of its sonata form structure, even more compressed. The movement is marked *Prestissimo* (“very fast”); huge melodic leaps and extreme dynamic contrasts are everywhere to be found.
- A. The first theme is characterized by a six-note motive heard initially in octave unison between right and left hands. (**Piano example.**)
 - B. Heard quietly at first, this motive quickly develops into a fire-breathing theme that tears up and down the keyboard and concludes with a crashing open cadence. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 5 in C Minor, op. 10, no. 1 [1798], movement 3, theme 1.)
 - C. Beethoven omits the modulating bridge and begins theme 2 in the new key of Eb major without the slightest transition. Theme 2 features a rising scalar motive that spans six notes, what is called the *interval of a sixth*. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 5 in C Minor, op. 10, no. 1 [1798], movement 3, theme 2.)
 - D. The cadence material begins with the theme 1 motive in the bass, heard against a rapid octave tremolo in the treble. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 5 in C Minor, op. 10, no. 1 [1798], movement 3, cadence material.)
 - E. The entire exposition takes just under 1 minute to play, and the development section, which is based entirely on the theme 1 motive, is even more compressed, running a total of 11 measures in length. It might be brief, but it becomes frenzied before ending on an open cadence in preparation for the recapitulation. (**Musical selections:** Piano Sonata no. 5 in C Minor, op. 10, no. 1 [1798], movement 3, development and recapitulation.)
 - F. As we might expect, compressed or not, this movement still has some surprises for us, and Beethoven springs them in the coda.
 1. First, he ends the recapitulation in the key of C minor and immediately begins the coda on an Ab dominant seventh chord, the dominant chord of Db major, a distant key from the tonic C minor! He gets away with this “instant” modulation by using the pitch C as a pivot between C minor and Ab, in which the C then resolves upward to a Db. (**Piano example.**) Following a “cameo” appearance of theme 2 in the key of Db major, the tempo slows, and Beethoven effects a modulation back to C minor.
 2. Next, with the key back in C minor, Beethoven offers a closing melody that is a combination and a contraction of both themes 1 and 2. (**Piano example.**)

3. The closing music gets quieter, and finally, the piece ends on a C major chord rather than a C minor chord, sounding incomplete. We listen from two measures before the coda, so that we might hear the pivot from C minor to Db major, through to the end of the movement. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 5 in C Minor, op. 10, no. 1 [1798], movement 3, coda.)

Lecture Six

The Striking and Subversive, Op. 10 Continued

Scope: The Piano Sonata no. 6 in F Major remained a special favorite of Beethoven's for many years after its composition. And, indeed, the sonata reflects well Beethoven's own brand of musical humor. In this lecture, we'll examine the elements that make this sonata seem so playful, before we turn to the grander conclusion of the op. 10 set, the Piano Sonata no. 7 in D Major, where we'll see Beethoven writing for a piano that did not exist in his lifetime!

Outline

- I. Any pianist who performs Beethoven's op. 10, nos. 1 and 2, back to back must be able to transit from the emotional world of tragic passion to affable good humor, from stormy weightiness to frolicsome playfulness, at the flick of the wrist. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 6 in F Major, op. 10, no. 2 [1798], movement 1, theme 1.)
 - A. The literature refers to this first movement as being "capricious" and "willfully bizarre," as a "patchwork" or a "quilt." All these words and phrases correctly imply that it is an assemblage of unlike parts put together in such a way as to create maximum contrast and surprise.
 - B. As we listen to the exposition, be aware of Beethoven's comedic sense of timing and contrast. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 6 in F Major, op. 10, no. 2 [1798], movement 1, exposition.)
 - C. The development section is one of the most unusual Beethoven ever composed. It is based almost entirely on the brief, three-note cadential figure that concludes the exposition. (**Piano example.**)
 - D. With the exception of a modulatory episode in broken octaves, the development section is based almost completely on the brief, three-note cadence figure we just heard. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 6 in F Major, op. 10, no. 2 [1798], movement 1, development.)
 - E. An open cadence followed by a long pause immediately precedes the beginning of the recapitulation. The pause allows us to consider the fact that we are not, harmonically, where we're supposed to be. The open cadence we heard before the pause at the conclusion of the development section wants to—and will—resolve to the key of D major—a long way from the proper and expected key of F major.
 1. At first, theme 1 seems to be blithely unaware that it is rather inappropriately "dressed" in D major, as it proceeds much as it did in the exposition. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 6 in F Major, op. 10, no. 2 [1798], movement 1, recapitulation, theme 1, phrase 1.)
 2. A long and unexpected pause follows, as if the theme has suddenly gotten a look at itself in a mirror. What follows is pure comic theater: the theme tiptoes through G minor and effects a delicate little modulation toward F major. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 6 in F Major, op. 10, no. 2 [1798], movement 1, recapitulation, theme 1, modulation.)
 3. Back where it belongs—in F major—theme 1 picks up where it left off, its dignity remarkably intact. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 6 in F Major, op. 10, no. 2 [1798], movement 1, recapitulation, theme 1, conclusion.)
 4. Let's listen to the entire recapitulation, starting with theme 1's *faux pas* in D major. The movement has no coda, so it will conclude with the same descending, three-note cadential motive that ended the exposition. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 6 in F Major, op. 10, no. 2 [1798], movement 1, recapitulation.)
- II. There is no "slow movement" in this three-movement sonata. Instead, Beethoven provides a movement marked *allegretto*, meaning "a little *allegro*, a little fast." The movement is in triple meter, three-part form—A–B–A—and Beethoven marked the middle section—B—with the designation "trio." As a result, some sources call the movement a minuet and trio and others call it a scherzo, though it exhibits none of the elements of dance that would mark a minuet, nor the energy that would mark a scherzo.
 - A. The first part—section A—is in F minor. The opening consists of a single long phrase that rises, rather ominously, from the bottom of the piano and cadences, eventually, in the key of Ab major. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 6 in F Major, op. 10, no. 2 [1798], movement 2, A, part 1.)

- B. The next large phrase initially features an imitative dialogue and a number of *syncopations*—accents on the third and last beat of seven consecutive measures. The key transits back to F minor, and the ominous opening material is heard again, though now high in the piano. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 6 in F Major, op. 10, no. 2 [1798], movement 2, A, part 2.)
 - C. This movement is somewhat strange—neither a slow movement, nor a dance movement, nor a scherzo. The modulations and syncopations give it a capricious quality, though the rhythmically plodding nature of the main theme and the key of F minor imbue it with a heaviness that doesn’t fit at all with the playful brilliance of the first movement.
 - D. The trio section begins in the distant key of Db major (another pivot modulation, from F minor to Db major). It starts with a quiet, lyric, chorale-like melody and eventually works itself back to the dominant chord of the tonic F minor. (**Musical selection:** Beethoven Piano Sonata no. 6 in F Major, op. 10, no. 2 [1798], movement 2, trio.)
 - E. The return to section A is not a da capo; that is, the movement does not “go back to the top” and repeat the beginning. Rather, Beethoven has composed an entirely new version of the opening section, in which, after the first eight measures, the upper and lower parts are displaced one eighth note from each other. This rhythmic displacement adds a new element of suspense and drama, and this closing section ends with a degree of force new to this otherwise understated movement. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 6 in F Major, op. 10, no. 2 [1798], movement 2, da capo.)
- III. The third movement starts off like a fugue; features one main theme that returns periodically, like a rondo; modulates to the dominant; and introduces a cadence theme, like a sonata form. It has a long, complex development section, like a sonata form, and a closing section that avoids the fugue theme in favor of the cadence theme.
- A. We listen to the exposition—starting with the fugal beginning and concluding with the cadence theme. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 6 in F Major, op. 10, no. 2 [1798], movement 3, exposition.)
 - B. Simple and square though the thematic ideas are, the unrelenting speed, energy, and harmonic invention of this movement imbue it with a power and a sense of humor that mark it as the perfect complement for the first two movements. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 6 in F Major, op. 10, no. 2 [1798], movement 3, exposition repeat and remainder of movement.)
- IV. Like op. 2, op. 10 concludes with the grandest of its three component sonatas, Sonata no. 7 in D Major, the only four-movement sonata in the op. 10 set. We will spend most of our time discussing movements 1 and 2.
- A. The first movement is yet another incredible example of Beethoven’s genius for motivic development and his ability to get the maximum mileage out of the most banal musical ideas. The “essential motive” that drives the bulk of this first movement appears immediately, in the first four notes of the movement. (**Piano example.**) Those four descending-scale steps are the motive.
 - B. Theme 1 consists of four phrases. We will listen to them one at a time.
 1. Theme 1, phrase 1, is the motive, followed by an arpeggiated ascent. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 7 in D Major, op. 10, no. 3 [1798], movement 1, theme 1, phrase 1.)
 2. Next, we hear theme 1, phrase 2. This second phrase “harmonizes” the motive and sequences it downward. (**Piano example and Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 7 in D Major, op. 10, no. 3 [1798], movement 1, theme 1, phrase 2.)
 3. The third thematic phrase splits up the harmonization into *broken sixths*, in which the motive “step ladders” down in alternating notes. (**Piano example and Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 7 in D Major, op. 10, no. 3 [1798], movement 1, theme 1, phrase 3.)
 4. The final phrase expands on phrase 1, taking it so high up the piano keyboard that the last note—a high F#—was outside the range of the pianos that existed at the time. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 7 in D Major, op. 10, no. 3 [1798], movement 1, theme 1, phrase 4.)
 5. Before we discuss that high F#, let’s hear theme 1 in its entirety: all four phrases growing out of the frankly banal, four-note motive that began the movement; a brilliant, Beethovenian example, as one writer put it, of “witty games with rudimentary material.” (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 7 in D Major, op. 10, no. 3 [1798], movement 1, theme 1.)

6. For a moment, we return to that high F# at the climactic conclusion of the fourth phrase of theme 1. The phrase marches upward in octaves over a *crescendo*, meaning that, as the music rises, it gets louder and louder. **(Piano example.)**
 - a. The last three octaves of this ascending line are to be played *fortissimo*, especially the climactic last octave, an octave F#. **(Piano example.)**
 - b. The pianos that existed at the time Beethoven composed this sonata went up only to a high F natural; for this reason, what Beethoven actually wrote in his manuscript was just a single low F#. **(Piano example.)**
 - c. The same thing happens at the end of phrase 3 in the bass: Descending octaves move downward to a low E, but there was no low E on the pianos of Beethoven's time; once again, at the most important moment in the line, he had to write a single note instead of a full octave. Listen to the contrast between what he wrote and what we want to hear. **(Piano examples.)**
 - d. Clearly, if Beethoven had had a larger piano, he would have written the octaves where the limits of his piano forced him to write single notes. In our recordings, Claude Frank, indeed, plays the octaves.
- C. Returning to the four-note descending motive that powers so much of this movement, let's hear the opening of theme 2 before we analyze it. **(Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 7 in D Major, op. 10, no. 3 [1798], movement 1, theme 2.)
 1. The four-note descending motive is, not surprisingly, the germinal element of theme 2, as well. **(Piano example.)** Likewise, the cadence theme grows directly out of theme 1. **(Piano example.)** The exposition concludes with a series of unadorned, four-note descending motives. **(Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 7 in D Major, op. 10, no. 3 [1798], movement 1, exposition close.)
 2. Let's listen to the entire exposition with the understanding that not quite everything grows out of the four-note motive that began theme 1, but so much does grow out of it that the exposition is imbued with an extraordinary degree of unity. **(Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 7 in D Major, op. 10, no. 3 [1798], movement 1, exposition.)
- D. The development section begins with a series of four-note motives followed by the ascending idea that marked theme 1. **(Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 7 in D Major, op. 10, no. 3 [1798], movement 1, development section, part 1.)
- E. The remainder of the development section sees theme 1 stretched, as both the descending and ascending elements of the theme are extended beyond their original lengths. **(Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 7 in D Major, op. 10, no. 3 [1798], movement 1, development section and recapitulation, theme 1.)
- V. The French biographer, novelist, playwright, and polemicist Romain Rolland guides us through the dark recesses of the second movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata in D Major.
 - A. Rolland writes, as the exposition begins, "the motive of grief [emerges] on the slow epic rhythm...; a melodious *lamento* blends with the tender accents that have come from Mozart, [though] the violent contrasts are Beethoven's own" (Scherman/Biancolli, 266). We listen to theme 1. **(Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 7 in D Major, op. 10, no. 3 [1798], movement 2, theme 1.)
 - B. Rolland continues: "The second part [the development section] opens with a calmly elegiac tone. But grief breaks in upon it once more... [pushed forward] by the inexorable tread of the march" (Scherman/Biancolli, 266). **(Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 7 in D Major, op. 10, no. 3 [1798], movement 2, development section.)
 - C. Rolland concludes: "In [the recapitulation, it is] the implacable force of destiny that subdues the shudders of the revolting soul, suddenly smitten to its knees and subsiding from cries to silent tears" (Scherman/Biancolli, 266).
- VI. It's hard to imagine a greater contrast than that between the end of the second-movement largo and the beginning of the third-movement minuet.
 - A. An argument can be made that the second movement largo is too dark, heavy, and "operatic" for the rest of the sonata. Is this yet another example of his desire to shock through extreme contrast, of elevating the non sequitur to the level of high art?

B. Beethoven calls his third movement a minuet, and despite its wealth of subtle complexities, it is, indeed, a minuet. It is also something of a lyric triumph, exactly the sort of music that listeners need to hear after the darkness of the second movement. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 7 in D Major, op. 10, no. 3 [1798], movement 3, minuet, opening.)

VII. The fourth-movement rondo is a genuine burlesque, filled with comic touches: long, breathless pauses; juxtapositions of light and “heavy” music; and a number of unexpected harmonic events. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 7 in D Major, op. 10, no. 3 [1798], movement 4, rondo theme.)

Lecture Seven

The *Pathétique* and the Sublime

Scope: Familiarity breeds, if not contempt, then perhaps a certain benign indifference, and that is the fate suffered to this day by Beethoven's most popular piano sonatas: the *Pathétique*, the *Moonlight* (op. 27, no. 2), the *Waldstein* (op. 53), and the *Appassionata* (op. 57). We have become too accustomed to these sonatas, and to some extent, their astonishing individuality and originality has been obscured by their popularity. Our job in this lecture is to try to hear this music as Beethoven's contemporary Dionys Weber first heard it—as “lots of crazy stuff” (Drake, 78).

Outline

- I. At the time of its publication, Beethoven was pleased with the title *Pathétique* for his op. 13 piano sonata, although in later life, he came to regret it, claiming that all of his works were “pathetic.” The word *pathetic* comes from the Greek *pathos*, which means “suffering” and “emotion.” *Pathetic*, properly defined, has to do with evoking a range of powerful emotions, most notably sorrow, sadness, melancholy, and tender pity. This is Beethoven's usage, one that invokes the “noble passions.”
- II. The first movement of the op. 13 piano sonata is in sonata form, “with an introduction.”
 - A. Beethoven's use of a slow, solemn first-movement introduction (the introduction is marked *Grave*, meaning “ponderously and seriously”) was not unusual for the Classical era. First-movement introductions were akin to “overtures” before the sonata form *allegro*, and they often evoked the aristocratic genre of the French overture. Beethoven's introduction is, on the surface, a French overture-inspired passage, replete with *dotted* (that is, long-short) rhythms and sweeping scales.
 1. But Beethoven's “introduction” is more than just that, because it recurs throughout the movement. It becomes an ongoing opportunity for profound contemplation. It is also generative, meaning that Beethoven uses it to lay out the essential motivic material that will power most of the entire movement.
 2. The introduction begins with a single, loud, thickly packed C minor chord. We might suggest that there is more musical, spiritual, and expressive energy and information packed into this one C minor chord than any other harmony in the Western repertoire! As we've already observed, for Beethoven, the key of C minor was pregnant with tragic meaning. (**Piano example.**)
 3. Curiously, Beethoven indicates that this C minor chord should be played *fp*—*forte/piano*—“loud/soft.” Such a dynamic marking makes sense for string or wind instruments, which can attack a pitch loudly, then sustain it softly, but that can't be done on a piano.
 4. This marking is a classic case of a *psychological notation*, that is, of asking a player to feel and project something that can't physically be done. Beethoven is asking the player to attack that C minor chord suddenly and explosively, as if out of the void; the sense should be of a blinding explosion of light occurring in a completely black environment, leaving behind a glowing and diminishing retinal image. The phrase that follows the explosion is the afterglow, a quiet, outward extrapolation of the opening C minor chord. (**Piano example.**)
 5. This *forte/piano* is the sort of notational detail that reveals both the workings of Beethoven's mind and the inner meaning of the music.
 6. The introduction consists of three large parts. Part 1 sees three successive rising phrases, each initiated with an explosive chord marked *forte/piano*. Each of these successively higher phrases features a motive that spans a minor third. (**Piano example.**)
 7. The dissonance level during the first part of the introduction is tremendous, building to a considerable degree of tension. This tension will be released by an operatic, cadenza-like line that transits to part 2 of the introduction while modulating to Eb major. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata in C Minor, op. 13 [*Pathétique*; 1799], movement 1, introduction, part 1.)
 8. Part 2 of the introduction begins in Eb major. The same ascending process we heard in part 1 of the introduction is, in part 2, extended and intensified. The rising minor-third motive, now heard in octaves over a throbbing harmonic accompaniment, alternates with crashing chordal commentary. This second part of the introduction climbs upward, reaching its climax on the dominant chord of the tonic

- C minor. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata in C Minor, op. 13 [*Pathétique*; 1799], movement 1, introduction, part 2.)
9. Part 3 of the introduction sees the collapse of the long ascent marked by parts 1 and 2. At first, two gentle, delicate, roulade-like embellishments hover high over the abyss. (**Piano example.**)
 10. The expressive weight of this introduction is far too great to be sustained this high on the keyboard, and a long, fast, and violent chromatic descent follows, thrusting the music back to C minor and to the beginning of the exposition proper. We will listen to part 3 of the introduction in its entirety, followed by theme 1 in the exposition. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata in C Minor, op. 13 [*Pathétique*; 1799], movement 1, introduction, part 3 and exposition, theme 1.)
 11. Earlier, we observed that, on the surface, Beethoven’s introduction seems to be just another slow and solemn Classical-era introduction, but of course, it’s not. There is no real division between the introduction and the *allegro* that follows; they are cut from the same fabric, musically and spiritually. And neither does Beethoven evoke, in his French overture–styled introduction, the king and the aristocracy; rather, he evokes himself and his own power of self-expression, his own power as “creator.”
- B.** The opening of theme 1 seems to simply explode upward. This upward motion is an intensification of the upward motion heard in parts 1 and 2 of the introduction. This rising portion of the theme also exhibits a shocking degree of tonal ambiguity, as it shifts between C minor and F minor.
1. The key of C minor has an Eb in it. The key of F minor has an E natural in it. The shifting back and forth between Eb’s and E naturals, between C minor and F minor, creates a modulatory, almost developmental environment that imbues the rising portion of the theme with rocket-like verticality. (**Piano example.**)
 2. After two phrases of this driving, primarily ascending music, a third, descending phrase follows that focuses on the dominant harmony of C minor and, in doing so, finally locks C minor into place. We listen to theme 1. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata in C Minor, op. 13 [*Pathétique*; 1799], movement 1, theme 1.)
 3. The modulating bridge sees the rising portion of theme 1 move through a number of different key areas, finally settling on the dominant harmony of the expected “new key”—Eb major. Let’s hear the modulating bridge, which ends on an open cadence. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata in C Minor, op. 13 [*Pathétique*; 1799], movement 1, modulating bridge.)
- C.** Classical-era practice demanded that a sonata form movement that began in minor modulate to a major key, called the *relative major*, for the second theme. Will theme 2 begin in the “correct” key, in this case, the key of Eb major? Of course not! Beethoven knew full well that the dark, turgid mood of this movement could broach no rays of light, at least not yet. Theme 2 begins in Eb minor and modulates toward the “correct” key of Eb major only in its final moments.
1. The theme itself consists of a further expansion of the rising motivic material that characterized both the introduction and theme 1. (**Piano examples.**)
 2. This rising portion of theme 2 is punctuated by a trilling, descending phrase that, as the theme progresses, becomes the predominant element of the theme. Let’s hear theme 2 in its entirety. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata in C Minor, op. 13 [*Pathétique*; 1799], movement 1, theme 2.)
- D.** The cadence material that follows is in three parts. Part 1 begins in Eb major but quickly modulates away though a number of key areas. It consists of a rising treble line heard against a descending bass line, all of it played in broken chords, and it constitutes one of the most striking passages in this movement. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata in C Minor, op. 13 [*Pathétique*; 1799], movement 1, cadence material, part 1.)
1. The second part of the cadence material presents a delicate, almost balletic cadence theme that twice descends almost two octaves. This cadence theme—in Eb major—represents the only extended major-mode passage in the entire movement.
 2. Part 3 of the cadence material sees theme 1 briefly resume in Eb major before steering back toward C minor. Let’s hear parts 2 and 3 of the cadence material and, with them, the conclusion of the exposition. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata in C Minor, op. 13 [*Pathétique*; 1799], movement 1, cadence material parts 2 and 3.)
 3. We now hear the cadence material in its entirety. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata in C Minor, op. 13 [*Pathétique*; 1799], movement 1, cadence material.)

- E. According to the traditions of sonata form, the entire exposition of a sonata form movement is to be repeated; indeed, the first published editions of the *Pathétique*, issued in 1799, indicated that the exposition should be repeated but not the introduction. However, later editions were not specific as to whether or not the introduction should be repeated as well. Today's performer, then, is left to decide whether to repeat the introduction, or to repeat nothing at all. Claude Frank chooses to repeat nothing at all, moving directly to the development section after having played the introduction and exposition once.
- F. The development section begins in the most striking way possible, with a return to the opening part of the introduction, although now in the key of G minor. By suddenly returning to this comparatively static introductory music, Beethoven abruptly stops the physical momentum created during the exposition. As a result, the development begins, as did the movement itself, on a note of deep and dark reflection.
1. Following is a synopsis of what we'll hear as we listen from the end of the exposition—cadence material part 3—through the entire development section.
 2. Part 1 of the development section sees the introduction return and features a pivot modulation from G minor to the distant key of E minor. Part 2 is built on the rising portion of theme 1, alternating with the rising, minor third motive of the introduction, in effect, juxtaposing mother (introductory motive) and daughter (theme 1).
 3. Part 3 of the development section features the rising element of the theme 1 sequences in the bass beneath a tremolo accompaniment. Part 4 reestablishes the dominant harmony of the tonic C minor, and part 5 features a long, legato descent that spans the entire keyboard and leads directly into the recapitulation and theme 1. (This long, legato descent is an extended version of the violent chromatic descent that concluded the introduction and initiated the exposition.)
 4. We listen from the end of the cadence material. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata in C Minor, op. 13 [*Pathétique*; 1799], movement 1, cadence material part 3 and development section.)
- G. The recapitulation proceeds generally as we expect it to, with a slightly abbreviated theme 2 now firmly ensconced in the home key of C minor. We pick up with the cadence material, now in C minor as well.
1. As in the exposition, the bass line beneath the third and final part of the cadence material descends to an F#. However, instead of being harmonized as the dominant chord of G minor, it is harmonized as an F# diminished-seventh chord, which is the most brutal and dissonant harmony in Beethoven's tonal vocabulary. (**Piano example.**)
 2. The frantic energy of the recapitulation stops short, and the ensuing coda begins as the development section did, with four measures drawn from the introduction. However, here in the coda, each of the first three measures of this four-measure "re-introduction" begins with silence, and overall, this final appearance of the introductory music features an even greater level of dissonance. The effect is one of emotional desolation.
 3. The second and final part of the coda sees theme 1 momentarily resume before the descending bass line once again crashes into an F# diminished-seventh chord, one that initiates the cadence that concludes the movement. We listen from the cadence material through the end of the movement. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata in C Minor, op. 13 [*Pathétique*; 1799], movement 1, recapitulation, cadence material, and coda.)
- H. The recapitulation—indeed, the great bulk of this first movement—has featured music of almost unremitting darkness. It will be up to the second movement to offer some degree of hope and light.
- III. The rondo theme of the second movement is one of the most beautiful and famous tunes in the repertoire. This theme is not merely "pretty"; it is, after the vicious first movement conclusion, a heroic if melancholy affirmation that life goes on, that beneath sorrow and pain, there is still grace and nobility. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata in C Minor, op. 13 [*Pathétique*; 1799], movement 2, rondo theme.)
- A. The first contrasting episode offers music of a slightly more dramatic bent before the rondo theme returns. We turn to the second contrasting episode, marked *dolente*, "sadly."
 - B. This episode acknowledges the pain and suffering of the first movement; the memory of the first movement is apparent in the high dissonance level of this new thematic material (which is heard as a dialogue between the treble and the bass), the Ab minor tonality that initiates the episode, and its throbbing, funeral drum-like, triplet-dominated accompaniment.

- C. Let's hear this second contrasting episode, this "memory of sorrow past," followed by the beginning of the third statement of the rondo theme. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata in C Minor, op. 13 [*Pathétique*; 1799], movement 2, second contrasting episode, and rondo theme restatement.)
- IV. The final movement of the *Pathétique* demonstrates that it is not the work of the fully mature Beethoven.
- A. The mature Beethoven—starting with the *Waldstein* Sonata, op. 53, of 1804—will come to see a "finale" as not just the last chapter of the story but as a culmination and intensification of everything that came before it.
- B. The rondo theme itself is a pointed and vigorous tune in four phrases that are well described in the WordScore. Let's hear the theme in its entirety. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata in C Minor, op. 13 [*Pathétique*; 1799], movement 3, rondo theme.)
- C. For reasons of time, we haven't talked about the many motivic connections between movements of the *Pathétique*. However, we should be aware that the rondo theme grows directly out of motivic materials first heard and developed in the first movement.
1. For example, we hear the opening minor-third motive of the first movement introduction. (**Piano example.**)
 2. This motive becomes the second theme of the first movement. (**Piano example.**)
 3. And this theme becomes the beginning of the third movement rondo theme. (**Piano example.**)
- D. The first contrasting episode begins with a recitative-like transitional passage that quickly gives way to a gentle, smoothly contoured theme in Eb major. Let's hear the first contrasting episode in its entirety, through the descending C minor scale and open cadence heard at its conclusion. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata in C Minor, op. 13 [*Pathétique*; 1799], movement 3, first contrasting episode.)
- E. The second contrasting episode, marked *Tranquillo*, begins with a new theme presented initially in two-part counterpoint in contrary motion. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata in C Minor, op. 13 [*Pathétique*; 1799], movement 3, second contrasting episode, opening.)
- F. The last appearance of the rondo theme, labeled A² in the WordScore Guide™, and the coda that follows. It is here, at the very end of the movement, that Beethoven truly recaptures the dark, dramatic mood of the first movement. We hear the last appearance of the rondo theme and the explosive coda. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata in C Minor, op. 13 [*Pathétique*; 1799], movement 3, A², and coda.)

Lecture Eight

The Opus 14 Sonatas

Scope: The op. 14 piano sonatas offer us a welcome break from the emotional extremes of the *Pathétique* Sonata, op. 13. We know Beethoven had to “suffer” for his art, but he certainly didn’t believe that we, as his audience, had to suffer as well. This is an important and often unrecognized fact about the music of Beethoven. As we will see in this lecture, Beethoven’s music can be supple, light-hearted, quick-witted, and genuinely humorous, just as it can be heroic, magnificent, and spiritually profound.

Outline

- I. Almost since the moment of its publication, there has been speculation that the Piano Sonata op. 14, no. 1, began its life as a string quartet. Indeed, Beethoven later set the sonata for four string instruments.
 - A. As we listen, we should be aware that the music is notated in such a way as to clearly indicate four independent musical parts for most of the exposition.
 - B. Not only can everything be most comfortably played by stringed instruments, but the nature of the writing here is more characteristic of Beethoven’s writing for strings than for piano. There’s a suppleness and a variety of rhythmic figuration that sounds more like Beethoven’s op. 18 string quartets than his recent piano works. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 9 in E Major, op. 14, no. 1 [c. 1799] movement 1, exposition.)
- II. The second movement scherzo opens with an incredibly beautiful theme in the key of E minor. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 9 in E Major, op. 14, no. 1 [c. 1799], movement 2, scherzo.)
 - A. The excerpt we just heard ended convincingly in the key of E minor. If we’re to understand what Beethoven is about to do in the cadence material that follows, we need to know something about the keys of E minor and E major relative to one another.
 1. The E minor scale Beethoven is using here, called *E harmonic minor*, consists of these pitches: E–F#–G–A–B–C–D#–E. (**Piano example.**)
 2. The key of E major consists of these pitches: E–F#–G#–A–B–C#–D#–E. (**Piano example.**)
 3. The difference between these two scales, or *pitch collections*, then, is that E minor contains a G natural and C natural (which are white notes on a piano), while conversely, E major contains a G# and C# (which are black notes on a piano).
 4. Returning to the cadence material, the passage we just heard features a G#, which would identify the key as being E major, but it also features a C natural, which would identify the key as being E minor. It’s completely ambiguous—it sounds like E major, but it has a darkness, an edge, that would identify it as being in minor. (**Piano example.**)
 5. The final three chords are all E major chords, and it would seem that finally, at the end of the cadence material, the conundrum of what key we’re in had been solved. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 9 in E Major, op. 14, no. 1 [c. 1799], movement 2, cadence material.)
 6. We’re in E major, but not for long, and with the advent of the trio, Beethoven’s game becomes clear. Immediately after that last chord, we hear two widely spaced, unharmonized E’s. (**Piano example.**)
 7. We should know by now that when Beethoven reduces a chord—in this case, an E major chord—to a single pitch—in this case, an E—it’s because he is about to do something wild harmonically, and he does. The pitch E becomes a harmonic free agent, able to go most anywhere. The trio theme begins on an E but an E harmonized as being part of a C major chord. Beethoven has transited from E major to the distant key of C major by pivoting off the pitch E—the tonic note of E major and the third degree of C major! (**Piano example.**)
 8. Why the ambiguity between E major and E minor during the cadence material of the scherzo? Why all the C naturals? Because Beethoven was preparing our ears for the C major trio to come.
 9. Let’s hear the scherzo cadence material, the pivot to C major, and the trio. Note that the trio ends on the dominant chord of E minor in anticipation of the da capo, the return to the scherzo. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 9 in E Major, op. 14, no. 1 [c. 1799], movement 2, scherzo, cadence material, and trio.)

- B.** Following the trio, we hear the scherzo da capo exactly as before, which means that it concludes with those same two unharmonized Es that pivoted into C major and the trio the first time.
- 1.** Those unharmonized Es do exactly the same thing during the da capo. Beethoven adds a coda that features the beginning of the trio in C major. Within seconds, the harmony shifts back toward the tonic E minor; we hear the dominant chord of E minor, then a three-fold repetition of an unharmonized E in octaves, followed by a full measure of rest, after which the movement ends.
 - 2.** Why would Beethoven end a movement with a full measure of rest? Let’s hear this brief coda before we answer that question. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 9 in E Major, op. 14, no. 1 [c. 1799], movement 2, coda.)
 - 3.** Those octave Es at the end are the musical equivalent of Mona Lisa’s smile: totally ambiguous! There’s no chord here, no harmony to tell us whether these Es are part of an E minor chord, an E major chord, or even a C major chord. (**Piano examples.**)
 - 4.** The three-fold octave Es might conclude the movement, but they certainly don’t create a sense of closure. The full measure of rest after the last of the Es tells the pianist not to release and relax but to maintain the tension and ambiguity created by the octave Es directly into the third and final movement.
 - 5.** Harmonic closure and dramatic release come only with the beginning of the third movement, a rondo in E major. Let’s listen from the second movement coda through the third movement rondo theme; be aware of the tension between the two movements and the power of the silence that lies between them. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 9 in E Major, op. 14, no. 1 [c. 1799], movement 3, rondo theme.)
- C.** This third movement rondo is the most “pianistic” movement in the sonata, although it still lacks the purely pianistic passages we have come to expect in Beethoven’s piano sonatas. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 9 in E Major, op. 14, no. 1 [c. 1799], movement 3, rondo.)
- IV.** Piano Sonata no. 10 in G Major, op. 14, no. 2, is, in the words of Beethoven’s student and friend Carl Czerny, one of the most “charming and cheerful” piano sonatas in the repertoire. It’s a piece that demands the lightest of touches, both in terms of one’s fingers and interpretation.
- A.** The first movement is in sonata form. Theme 1—in G major—is one of Beethoven’s trademark “something from nothing” themes. The basic thematic motive begins with an upward leap followed by a “step ladder” descent. (**Piano example** and **Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 10 in G Major, op. 14, no. 2 [c. 1799], movement 1, theme 1.)
 - B.** As we listen to theme 1 again, be aware of how much this theme sounds like guitar or harp music. There are no full chords of any sort in the opening, making this only one of two of Beethoven’s piano sonatas that begin in such a way. The gossamer lightness of the theme—a result of its two-voice texture—will dominate the entire movement. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 10 in G Major, op. 14, no. 2 [c. 1799], movement 1, theme 1.)
 - C.** The rhythmic complexity of this seemingly simple little theme is astonishing; we have to hear it to appreciate it. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 10 in G Major, op. 14, no. 2 [c. 1799], movement 1, theme 1.)
 - D.** The modulating bridge has a distinctly bird-like character. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 10 in G Major, op. 14, no. 2 [c. 1799], movement 1, modulating bridge.)
 - E.** Theme 2—in the contrasting key of D major—continues the generally “pastoral” mood. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 10 in G Major, op. 14, no. 2 [c. 1799], movement 1, theme 2.)
 - F.** Beethoven marks the cadence material that follows *dolce*, to be played “sweetly.” (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 10 in G Major, op. 14, no. 2 [c. 1799], movement 1, cadence material.)
 - G.** The development section is in six distinct parts. Part 1 features theme 1. Part 2 features theme 2. Part 3 begins with theme 1 heard in the bass. Eventually, theme 1 gives way to a series of *marcato* (literally, “hammered”) scales in the bass that ultimately lead to an open cadence and a pause. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 10 in G Major, op. 14, no. 2 [c. 1799], movement 1, development parts 1–3.)
 - H.** After the pause, theme 1 begins, and we may think that we’ve begun the recapitulation. The only problem is that we’re in the key of Eb major, quite distant from the tonic G major. The music modulates away from Eb major, and we are thrust into part 5 of the development, a roller-coaster ride of high-velocity scales and passagework.

- I. As part 6 of the development begins, we find ourselves surrounded by motives from theme 1, heard low, then high, and so on. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 10 in G Major, op. 14, no. 2 [c. 1799], movement 1, development parts 4–6 and recapitulation, theme 1.)
- V. Neither of the piano sonatas of op. 14 has a genuine “slow” movement. This second movement is the earliest example of theme and variations form in Beethoven’s piano sonatas.
- A. Theme and variations form is based on the process of variation. At the beginning of such a movement, a theme is stated. Each subsequent section of the movement is a variation of that theme. The variations might be as simple as changing the accompaniment or as complex as embellishing the theme beyond recognition. In this type of movement, we can also be sure that the variations will almost invariably feature the same phrase and the same basic harmonic structure as the theme; such a movement will also typically end with a coda.
- B. Beethoven’s theme is a quirky march with an internal phrase structure of || a ||: b a¹ :||. It’s “quirky,” because during its concluding phrase—a¹—it gets out of step with itself, as accents fall on the second, rather than the first beat of each “hut-two.” (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 10 in G Major, op. 14, no. 2 [c. 1799], movement 2, theme.)
- C. Three rather modest variations and a coda follow. The first variation sees the theme accompanied above by *syncopated* (that is, off-the-beat) notes. We listen to the opening phrase of variation 1. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 10 in G Major, op. 14, no. 2 [c. 1799], movement 2, variation 1, phrase a.)
- D. The second variation sees the theme itself syncopated against a bouncing accompaniment. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 10 in G Major, op. 14, no. 2 [c. 1799], movement 2, variation 2, phrase a.)
- E. The third variation sees the theme embedded in a broken-chord-type line and leads directly to the brief coda. The march in its original form briefly and quietly returns. Hushed, widely spaced cadence chords gently approach the movement’s conclusion, but the last chord is a crashing *fortissimo*. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 10 in G Major, op. 14, no. 2 [c. 1799], movement 2, coda.)
- VI. The third and final movement rondo brings back the rhythmic games and spare, generally two-voice texture of the first movement. The movement is in fast triple meter, and because of its mood and meter, Beethoven labeled it a scherzo even though, structurally, it’s a full-blown rondo.
- A. The rondo theme itself is lean, consisting essentially of a rising scale and the very sparest of accompaniments. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 10 in G Major, op. 14, no. 2 [c. 1799], movement 3, rondo theme.)
- B. The first contrasting episode features a series of big, explosive chords, each followed by a fast, quiet, skittering line. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 10 in G Major, op. 14, no. 2 [c. 1799], movement 3, first contrasting episode and return to rondo theme.)
- C. After a brief transition based on the rondo theme, the next contrasting episode features a lengthy and lovely new theme. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 10 in G Major, op. 14, no. 2 [c. 1799], movement 3, second contrasting episode and return to rondo theme.)
- D. The remainder of the movement features a developmental extension of the rondo theme, followed by a cadence theme and a coda in which the rondo theme returns, accompanied by rolling triplets in the bass.
- E. The conclusion of the movement—and the sonata—is fabulous. Just when we might expect a big, crashing cadence, we get, instead, a tiny thematic motive played *pianissimo* at the bottom of the piano, sounding rather more like a burp than an ending. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 10 in G Major, op. 14, no. 2 [c. 1799], movement 3, conclusion.)

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MOVEMENT I *Sonata form*

Allegro

Exposition

Theme 1

The theme features two motives: a rising arpeggio capped with a turn. The resemblance between this theme and themes in Mozart's "Little" G minor symphony, K. 183, of 1773 and the G minor symphony, K. 550, of 1788 is both unmistakable and unavoidable!

F minor

O
P
E
N
C
A
D
E
N
C
E

P
A
U
S
E

20 00.21

Theme 2

Part 1: Based on a falling arpeggio that outlines the dominant (V) chord of the new key of A^b major; note that the F^bs in this theme color and darken the key of A^b major

A^b major

26

Part 2: Based on a series of rising/falling motives

etc.

op. 2, no. 1 (1795)

Dedicated to Joseph Haydn, but inspired by Wolfgang Mozart!

8 00.09

Modulating Bridge

Part 1: Theme 1
rises out of the bass, sounding initially like a continuation of the theme before veering off to . . .

p

11

Part 2: Modulatory sequence based on the turn element of **Theme 1**

15

Part 3: Falling scalar fragments in the treble are heard against rising fragments in the bass

f

37

Part 3: Two long scalar descents

C
L
O
S
E
D

C
A
D
E
N
C
E

41 00.41

Cadence Material
A brisk **Cadence Theme** brings the **Exposition** to its conclusion:



A^b major

C
L
O
S
E
D

C
A
D
E
N
C
E



Development

48 01.42

Part 1: Two 3-measure phrases based on Theme 1

A^b major modulatory →

55 01.49

Part 2: Theme 2 heard in the treble

B^b minor → C minor

73 02.07

Part 4: The harmonic sequence of Part 3 continues here without the presence of Theme 2, as syncopated notes bounce between the treble and the bass

Recapitulation

101 02.36

Theme 1

F minor

O
P
E
N
P
C
A
D
E
N
C
E

108 02.45

Modulating Bridge

Part 1:
Theme 1
rises from
the bass

Part 2:
Turn
element of
Theme 1

Part 3:
Rising/fall-
ing phrase

Coda

146 03.25

An unexpected harmonic shift to the subdominant key (B^b minor)

P
A
U
S
E

Another shift, this one to A^b major

P
A
U
S
E

67 02.02

Part 3: Modulatory sequence with Theme 2 now in the bass

C minor \rightsquigarrow B^b minor \rightsquigarrow A^b major

81 02.16

Part 5: Lengthy extended dominant passage built on falling, two-note motives in the treble and a:

C pedal in the bass \longrightarrow

Eight repeated Cs

95 02.30

Part 6: Turns drawn from Theme 1 heard over a series of suspensions that drive the bass line downward:

C \longrightarrow B^b \longrightarrow A \longrightarrow G \longrightarrow

119 02.57

Theme 2

Part 1:
Falling
arpeggio

F minor

Part 2:
Rising/falling
motives

Part 3:
Two long
scalar descents

140 03.18

Cadence Material

Brisk Cadence Theme

F minor

O
P
E
N

C
A
D
E
N
C
E

149

A series of hammering chords redirects the harmony to F minor and brings the movement to its conclusion



MOVEMENT II *Truncated Sonata form (sonata form without a development section)*
Adagio

Exposition

Theme 1: *Cantabile*
 A long, elegant and lyric theme



C
L
O
S
E
D

C
A
D
E
N
C
E

16 01.16

Theme 2
 A dramatic, tempest-style theme heard against a rolling,
 wave-like accompaniment



Recapitulation

32 02.26

Theme 1
 This elegant and lyric
 theme is now highly
 embellished

a'
 F major

40 03.05

b'

C
A
D
E
N
C
E

C
L
O
S
E
D

(Beethoven dispenses
 entirely with the dra-
 matic Theme 2, and via
 a brief descending line
 in the treble, progresses
 directly to the . . .)

This form is sometimes called cavatina form, as it follows the structural outlines of the outer sections of an operatic *da capo aria*. In both its form and opera-style melodic embellishments, this movement once again betrays the influence of Mozart, who often used this form in his slow movements, and whose opera-style piano writing made the instrument “sing” in a way it had not done before.

8 00.40
A second thematic phrase, higher than the first

b

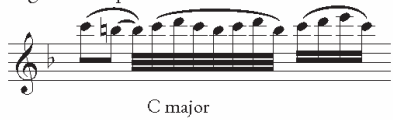
C
L
O
S
E
D

C
A
D
E
N
C
E

(Truncated sonata form—or cavatina form—is a thematic procedure. Lacking a development section, such a movement will be about its thematic statements, rather than about thematic development. Likewise, in such a movement, transitional/bridge material will be kept to a minimum. In this movement, Beethoven dispenses entirely with a modulating bridge and moves directly from the closed cadence that concluded Theme 1, to Theme 2 and the new key of D minor.)

23 01.41

Cadence Material
Part 1: A florid Cadence Theme heard high in the piano



28 02.00

Part 2: Cadence Theme heard over passage work in the bass

31

Modulation back toward the tonic F major

48 03.44

Cadence Material
Part 1: Florid Cadence Theme

F major

53

Part 2: Cadence Theme heard over passage work in the bass

Coda

56 04.28

Part 1: Rolling 32nd-note triplets precede one last iteration of the Cadence Theme

F major

59

Part 2: Cadential unit brings the movement to a gentle conclusion

This minuet is a brilliant example of just the sort of rhythmic manipulation and displacement, motive driven themes, and thematic fragmentation and reconfiguration that characterize Beethoven's mature compositions.

The action intensifies as the 3-note motives increasingly connect into larger 6-note motives

Two closing motives slow the action and allow the phrase to cadence

C
L
O
S
E
D

C
A
D
E
N
C
E

(A^b major)

The cadence unit is reduced to a 3-note unit

The reduced, 3-note cadence unit is used to spin out a violent descending passage that powers the minuet toward its final phrase

modulatory ~~~~~>

This final phrase of the minuet sees a *further* intensification of the opening thematic material before the energy is allowed to dissipate and the minuet concludes, marking, over its course, a full two-octave descent.

29 00.47

The Minuet Theme initially resumes as a dialogic from bass to treble

Trills and grace notes are added to the Minuet Theme, intensifying its momentum and thickening the texture of the music

F minor

a

Trio

The trio features an engaging, vaguely rustic fiddle-style tune that, despite its sunny disposition, is drawn directly from the violent descending passage that powered phrase *b* of the minuet to its conclusion (and which itself was a product of the 3-note reduction of the cadential unit which, in turn, was a direct outgrowth of the opening Minuet Theme). Isn't motivic development/metamorphosis fun?

40 01.31

Fiddle-style tune

c
F major
p

O
P
E
N
C
A
D
E
N
C
E

Two cadential units quiet the music
and provide the space necessary (via
rests) for the energy to dissipate

50 01.52

A canonic presentation of
the fiddle-style theme

As before

d *c¹*

ff

Minuet da capo

MOVEMENT IV *Sonata form*
Prestissimo

Exposition

5

Theme 1: A terse, explosive theme of shocking extremes.

Hammering chords in groups
of three are heard over rising/
falling arpeggios

a
F minor

A sweet, gentle second phrase—
the “alpha” to the opening
“omega”—follows without any
preparation

b
A^b major

22 00.21

24

26

30

Theme 2

More a harmonic progression than a tune, **Theme 2**
consists of rapidly descending triplets in the treble
against rising groups of three, and then two, in the
bass, creating a veritable storm of sound!

a
C minor
f

*a*¹

b

*b*¹

A work of youthful violence with its many indications of fortissimo and its brilliant arpeggios.
—Rosen

12 00.12

Modulating Bridge

The hammering music resumes, now outlining the dominant (V) of the key of C minor

20

3 1/2-octave
C minor
scale



b¹

F minor

34 00.34

Cadence Material

Part 1: A lyric, though tragic-tinted theme heard in octaves over a triplet accompaniment



a
C minor
p

50 00.51

Part 2: Vicious cadential unit based on Theme 1, *a*

The harmony shifts back to F minor in preparation for the **Exposition** repeat



a¹

C minor
ff



Development

Not your typical development section; this is in actuality an extended episode in A^b major, in which elements of the **Exposition** appear only briefly.

57 01.56

Part 1:

Abrupt and effective; a closed cadence in C minor is followed by three hammered chords, which suddenly redirect the harmony toward A^b major!

ff

59 02.00

Part 2: New Theme

A charming, gracious, thoroughly Viennese theme grows out of the angst-laden conclusion of the **Exposition**; we cannot imagine a greater contrast!



a
A^b major
p

109 02.51

Part 3:

Theme 1 opening quietly alternates with elements of the New Theme

Theme 1 New Theme Theme 1 New Theme Theme 1 New Theme extended
modulatory ~~~~~>

Recapitulation

138 03.21

Theme 1

a *b* *b¹*
F minor A^b major F minor
f *p* *f*

152 03.35

Modulating Bridge Theme 1, a

a
V of F minor
ff

161 03.44

Theme 2

a *a¹* *b* *b¹*
F minor
f

69

An octave higher

*a*¹

78 02.20

b

87

In octaves

*a*²

94 02.36

b

103

In octaves

*a*³

127 03.10

Part 4:

Theme 2 outlines the dominant (V) chord of the tonic F minor; quiet though this music is, we feel whatever remains of the charming, gracious mood shift back toward “the dark side”

decrec.

O
P
E
N

C
A
D
E
N
C
E

173 03.57

Cadence Material
Part 1: Cadence Theme

*a a*¹
F minor
p

04.14

Part 2: Vicious cadential unit based on Theme 1, *a*

a

f

4-octave
F minor
arpeggio

ff



MOVEMENT I *Sonata form*

Introduction: *Grave*

Part 1: Massive, orchestral chords and an extraordinary level of dissonance characterize the funereal opening; this is music of great seriousness and tragic content. The opening motive will characterize most of the **Introduction** and will be transformed into **Theme 1** of the sonata form proper



Exposition

1 01.42

Theme 1

A violent, nearly vertical theme literally explodes upward; the theme is, itself, an expansion of the introductory motive, and is filled with harmonic ambiguity, featuring, as it does, as many E's (and therefore sounding as if it's in C major) as E's (C minor) as E's (C minor)!



25 01.58

Modulating Bridge

The opening, vertical element of **Theme 1** is sequenced upward over the same sort of buzz-saw-like tremelo that accompanied **Theme 1**

41 02.10

Theme 2

A further expansion of the initially rising thematic material that has thus far characterized the movement, **Theme 2** begins by rising nearly three octaves!



E^b minor

op. 13, "Pathétique" (1799)

Beethoven's first successful effort at the sublime.
—Rosen

5 00.42

Part 2: The opening motive is sequenced upward in a passage of great dynamic contrast and pathos, one calculated (or so it might seem) to obliterate any contemporary piano!

9 01.19

Part 3: Two delicate roulade-like embellishments lead to a long, fast, and forlorn chromatic descent, thrusting the music directly into the . . .



9

17 01.53

This closing phrase alternates percussive, syncopated octave Gs (the dominant pitch of C minor) with agitated descending arpeggios

*a*¹

b

As **Theme 2** progresses, the closing, trilling, descending portion of the theme becomes predominant

Finally, at the very last moment, the key moves toward E^b major, where we expected **Theme 2** to be all along!

79 02.36

Cadence Material

Part 1: A rising treble line is heard against a descending bass line

2x
E^b major

103 02.53

Part 2: **Cadence Theme** a delicate, almost balletic, theme twice DESCENDS almost two octaves

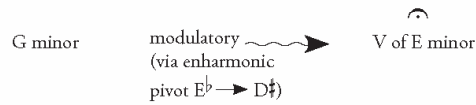
E^b major

Development

123 03.11

Part 1: *Grave*

The **Introduction** briefly returns, putting the skids to the momentum and a major damper on the mood!



139 04.03

Part 3: The rising opening of **Theme 1** is sequenced and developed in the bass beneath a slowly descending tremolo

Recapitulation

185 04.35

Theme 1

a

193

In lieu of the **Modulating Bridge**, this second phrase of Theme 1 is extended considerably, moving through a number of different key areas before returning to C minor

*a*²

C minor

Coda

285 05.52

Part 1: *Grave*

The **Coda** begins the same way as did the **Development**, with four measures drawn from the **Introduction**. However, here in the **Coda**, the first three measures of this four-measure “re-**Introduction**” begin with silence and feature a level of dissonance new even for this dissonance-rich movement. The effect is one of desolation; of open, craggy and dangerous space. It is an inspired moment!

O
P
E
N

C
A
D
E
N
C
E

211 04.53

Theme 2
Slightly abbreviated

C minor

243 05.15

Cadence Material

Part 1:
Rising treble line
heard against falling
bass line

2x

C minor

Part 2:
Cadence
Theme

C minor

Part 3:
Theme 1
over descending
bass line



05.45



F#

D

I

M

I

N

I

S

H

E

D

7th

(VII^{o7}/V)

ff

289 06.36

Part 2: *Allegro molto e con brio*

Theme 1 momentarily resumes before the descending bass line abruptly pushes the movement to its crashing conclusion

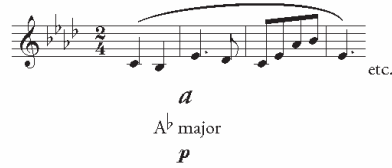


(This **Recapitulation** has featured music of almost unremitting darkness. No consolation has been offered, and certainly none received. It will be up to the second movement to offer some sense of hope and light.)

MOVEMENT II *Rondo form*
Adagio cantabile

A Rondo Theme

As exquisite and lyric a theme as Beethoven ever wrote, and as beautiful as any other in the repertoire. Following on the heels of the tragic first movement conclusion, this theme takes on a sense of lyric melancholy that perhaps only Mozart and Chopin could equal



C
L
O
S
E
D

C
A
D
E
N
C
E

B First Contrasting Episode

17 01.12

Part 1: A new and more dramatic passage features a through-composed theme characterized by more and more embellishment as it unfolds



C
T.
O
S
E
D

C
A
D
E
N
C
E

E^b major

A^I Rondo Theme

29 02.08

a
A^b major

C
A
D
E
N
C
E

C
L
O
S
E
D

9 00.37

The theme is now heard
one octave higher and
more fully accompanied

a'

C
L
O
S
E
D

C
A
D
E
N
C
E

P
A
U
S
E

23 01.40

Part 2: Cadential phrase sees a falling musical line dissipate the remaining dramatic energy generated by **Part 1** in preparation for the return of . . .

E^b major ~~~~~> E^b7 major
(V of A^b)

O
P
E
N

C
A
D
E
N
C
E

C Second Contrasting Episode: *Dolente*

36 02.43

Part 1: The slight drama of the **First Contrasting Episode** is here increased ten-fold, as the storm hits; the memory of the first movement is apparent in the high dissonance level of this new thematic material (heard as a dialogue between treble and bass), and the throbbing, triplet-dominated accompaniment

Treble

Bass

a

A^b minor

modulatory

ff

C
L
O
S
E
D

C
A
D
E
N
C
E

A² Rondo Theme

51 03.45

The throbbing, triplet accompaniment that characterized **B** now continues under the Rondo Theme

a

A^b major

C
L
O
S
E
D

C
A
D
E
N
C
E

59 04.21

An octave higher

a¹

A^b major

C
L
O
S
E
D

C
A
D
E
N
C
E

45 03.19

Part 2: The second thematic phrase is marked *tranquillo* and begins in E MAJOR

48

Rising diminished arpeggios in the bass redirect the harmony in anticipation of . . .

O
P
E
N

C
A
D
E
N
C
E

*a*¹
E major

Coda

66 04.57

Part 1: A gentle, falling cadence theme is heard twice, the second time in octaves

C
L
O
S
E
D

C
A
D
E
N
C
E

70 05.20

Part 2: Three compact cadential figures bring the movement to a calm and quiet conclusion

C
L
O
S
E
D

C
A
D
E
N
C
E

A^b major

 pp



MOVEMENT III *Rondo form*

Allegro

A Rondo Theme

A pointed and vigorous **Rondo Theme** in four phrases:

Phrase 1: Antecedent, rises an octave and pauses on the dominant pitch (G) harmony



Phrase 3: Consequent #2, more forcefully repeats the previous phrase



B First Contrasting Episode

18 00.18

Part 1: Transitional passage sees forceful chords followed by rising/falling gestures

modulatory ~~~~~>

Although this third movement is less 'pathetic' ['filled with pathos'] than the preceding ones, the player alone will be to blame should the "Pathétique Sonata" end apathetically.
—Hans von Bülow

Phrase 2: Consequent #1, works its way down, coming to rest on the tonic pitch (C) and harmony

Phrase 4: Cadential phrase ending in C minor

25 00.26

Part 2: **Theme B**, *Tranquillo*

A gentle, smoothly contoured theme characterized by rising/falling stepwise motion

The harmony momentarily moves toward E^b minor as **Theme B** draws to its conclusion

33 00.34

Part 3: NEW FIGURE in 8th-note triplets eventually brings the harmony back to E^b major



C
L
O
S
E
D

C
A
D
E
N
C
E

P
A
U
S
E

E^b major

A Rondo Theme

61 01.08

As before

Phrase 1

Phrase 2

Phrase 3

Phrase 4

C minor

C Second Contrasting Episode

79 01.26

Part 1: Theme C, *Tranquillo*

New theme presented, initially, in two-part counterpoint in contrary motion



a
A^b major
p

91

Theme C
now
doubled
at the 3rd
and 6th

95 01.45

Brief
inter-
lude

*a*¹

43 00.46

Part 4: Cadence Theme

Calm, quiet and characterized by relatively long note values, this theme provides a moment of rest before more rhythmically active music resumes



E^b major

C
L
O
S
E
D

C
A
D
E
N
C
E

51 00.55

Part 5: NEW FIGURE

resumes in dialogue between treble and bass

2 1/2-
octave
scalar
descent



⌒
O
P
E
N

C
A
D
E
N
C
E

(V of
C minor)

98

Theme C accompanied first below, then above, with a staccato descending scale

*a*²

107 01.58

Part 2: Alternately rising/falling 16th-note and 18th-note triplet arpeggios outline a G dominant harmony, the dominant (V) of the tonic C minor

2 1/2-
octave
scalar
descent



O
P
E
N

C
A
D
E
N
C
E

modulatory ~~~~~> C minor

A¹ Rondo Theme

120 02.15

Phrase 1:
As before

Phrase 2:
As before

128

Phrase 3:
The theme moves into the bass; this phrase segues directly into . . .

B¹ Recapitulation of the First Contrasting Episode in C major (Tonic major)

134 02.30

Part 1: Theme B, *Tranquillo*
A gentle, smoothly contoured theme characterized by rising/falling stepwise motion

C major

143 02.40

Part 2: NEW FIGURE
Poco animando
In dialogue between treble and bass

C major

A² Rondo Theme

171 03.13

Phrase 1:
As before

Phrase 2:
As before

178

Phrase 3:
Highly embellished and syncopated, this phrase segues directly into . . .

C minor

Coda

182 03.25

Part 1: NEW FIGURE
in treble, punctuated by explosive cadential chords

C minor
(emphasis on IV)

193 03.37

Part 2: *Con fuoco*
Cadential figure alternates downward scale fragments in the treble and punctuating chords in the bass

f

3 1/2-octave scale reorients the harmony toward A^b major

ff



C
L
O
S
E
D

C
A
D
E
N
C
E

P
A
U
S
E

153 02.51

Part 3: Cadence Theme

Initially as before, but then extended to accommodate a transition back to minor

O
P
E
N

C
A
D
E
N
C
E

202 03.51

Part 3: Theme 1
opening heard quietly and calmly in A^b major

p

Two quiet but ominous upward gestures redirect the harmony back toward C minor

pp

208

Vicious downward C minor scale drives the ending firmly into C minor!

ff  *fff*



Timeline

- 1770 Born in Bonn, Germany; baptized on December 17, 1770.
- 1774 Beethoven begins instruction on the piano and violin.
Birth of brother Casper Anton Carl van Beethoven.
- 1776 Birth of brother Nikolaus Johann van Beethoven.
- 1780 Beethoven begins his musical studies with Christian Gottlob Neefe.
- 1783 Beethoven receives his press notice, written by Neefe, in Cramer's *Magazin der Musik*.
- 1784 Beethoven is appointed assistant court organist in Bonn, a salaried position.
- 1787 Beethoven's mother dies of tuberculosis; Beethoven, by necessity, becomes the de facto head of the household and primary guardian of his two younger brothers.
- July 1792 Joseph Haydn, returning from England, passes through Bonn and, after having examined Beethoven's music, invites him to Vienna for study.
- November 1792 Beethoven departs for Vienna, never to set foot in Bonn again.
- 1793–1795 Beethoven establishes himself as a pianist of extraordinary ability and originality and a composer of promise.
- 1795 Beethoven completes the op. 2 piano sonatas:
Piano Sonata no. 1 in F Minor, op. 2, no. 1, dedicated to Joseph Haydn
Piano Sonata no. 2 in A Major, op. 2, no. 2, dedicated to Joseph Haydn
Piano Sonata no. 3 in C Major, op. 2, no. 3, dedicated to Joseph Haydn.
- 1796 Beethoven begins to experience sporadic ringing in his ears; over the course of the next 22 years, his hearing will slowly but surely degenerate.
Piano Sonata no. 20 in G Major, op. 49, no. 2 (not published until 1805).
- 1797 Piano Sonata no. 4 in Eb Major, op. 7, dedicated to Countess Barbara von Keglevics.
Piano Sonata no. 19 in G Minor, op. 49, no. 1 (not published until 1805).
- 1798 Beethoven completes the op. 10 piano sonatas:
Piano Sonata no. 5 in C Minor, op. 10, no. 1, dedicated to Countess Anna Margarete von Browne
Piano Sonata no. 6 in F major, op. 10, no. 2, dedicated to Countess Anna Margarete von Browne
Piano Sonata no. 7 in D Major, op. 10, no. 3, dedicated to Countess Anna Margarete von Browne.
- 1798–1799 Beethoven composes his six String Quartets, op. 18, the so-called “early quartets.”
Piano Sonata no. 8 in C Minor, pp. 13, (*Pathétique*), dedicated to Prince Karl Lichnowsky.
Beethoven completes the op. 14 piano sonatas:
Piano Sonata no. 9 in E Major, op. 14, no. 1, dedicated to Baroness Josephine von Braun
Piano Sonata no. 10 in G Major, op. 14, no. 2, dedicated to Baroness Josephine von Braun.
- 1800 The composition and premiere of Symphony no. 1; Septet in Eb Major, op. 20.
Piano Sonata no. 11 in Bb Major, op. 22, dedicated to Count von Browne.

- 1801.....Piano Sonata no. 12 in Ab Major, op. 26 (*Funeral March*), dedicated to Prince Karl Lichnowsky. Beethoven completes the op. 27 piano sonatas:
Piano Sonata no. 13 in Eb Major, op. 27, no. 1, “*Sonata quasi un fantasia*,” dedicated to Princess Josephine von Liechtenstein
Piano Sonata no. 14 in C# Minor, op. 27, no. 2, “*Sonata quasi un fantasia*” (*Moonlight*), dedicated to Countess Giulietta Guicciardi
Piano Sonata no. 15 in D Major, op. 28 (*Pastoral*), dedicated to Joseph von Sonnenfels.
- 1802.....Beethoven completes the op. 31 piano sonatas:
Piano Sonata no. 16 in G Major, op. 31, no. 1
Piano Sonata no. 17 in D Minor, op. 31, no. 2 (*Tempest*)
Piano Sonata no. 18 in Eb Major, op. 31, no. 3.
- Fall 1802.....Beethoven experiences a suicidal crisis over his hearing loss, realizing by now that it is both progressive and, likely, incurable.
- 1803.....With Napoleon Bonaparte as his inspiration, Beethoven reinvents himself emotionally and spiritually as a hero, triumphing over adversity; Symphony no. 3.
- 1804.....Piano Sonata no. 21 in C Major, op. 53 (*Waldstein*), dedicated to Count Ferdinand von Waldstein.
Piano Sonata no. 22 in F Major, op. 54.
Piano Sonata no. 23 in F Minor, op. 57 (*Appassionata*), dedicated to Count Franz von Brunsvik.
- 1804–1805.....Beethoven composes the opera *Leonore*, eventually to be known as *Fidelio*.
- 1806–1810.....Beethoven composes the five so-called “middle string quartets”: op. 59, nos. 1–3; op. 74, and op. 95.
- 1806.....Symphony no. 4.
- 1808.....Symphonies no. 5 and 6
- 1809.....Piano Sonata no. 24 in F# Major, op. 78; Piano Sonata no. 25 in G Major, op. 79.
- 1810.....Piano Sonata no. 26 in Eb Major, op. 81a, (*Farewell*), dedicated to Archduke Rudolph.
- 1812.....Symphony no. 7.
The “Immortal Beloved” affair—Beethoven’s affair with Antonie Brentano—reaches its climax during the summer; Beethoven ends the affair and returns to Vienna deeply depressed.
- 1813.....Symphony no. 8 (*Wellington’s Victory*).
- 1813–1814.....A “Beethoven revival,” built on the patriotic fervor surrounding the defeat of Napoleon, vaults Beethoven to the forefront of Austrian music and society.
- 1814.....Piano Sonata no. 27 in E Minor, op. 90, dedicated to Count Moritz Lichnowsky.
- 1815.....Beethoven’s brother Casper dies of tuberculosis; Beethoven is determined to become sole guardian of his brother’s son, Karl.
- 1815–1820.....The legal battle over the guardianship of Karl.
- 1816.....Piano Sonata no. 28 in A Major, op. 101, dedicated to Baroness Dorothea von Ertmann.
- 1818.....Beethoven reinvents himself once again, and his compositional fire is rekindled.
Piano Sonata no. 29 in Bb, op. 106 (*Hammerklavier*), dedicated to Archduke Rudolph.
- 1820.....Piano Sonata no. 30 in E Major, op. 109, dedicated to Maximiliana Brentano.

- 1821 Piano Sonata no. 31 in Ab Major, op. 110.
- 1822 Piano Sonata no. 32 in C Minor, op. 111, dedicated to Archduke Rudolf; the London edition dedicated to Antonie Brentano.
- 1824 Symphony no. 9.
- December 1826..... Beethoven falls ill with liver disease.
- March 26, 1827..... Beethoven dies (5:45 P.M.).

Beethoven's Piano Sonatas
Part II
Professor Robert Greenberg



THE TEACHING COMPANY ®

Robert Greenberg, Ph.D.

San Francisco Performances

Robert Greenberg was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1954 and has lived in the San Francisco Bay area since 1978. He received a B.A. in music, magna cum laude, from Princeton University in 1976. His principal teachers at Princeton were Edward Cone, Daniel Werts, and Carlton Gamer in composition; Claudio Spies and Paul Lansky in analysis; and Jerry Kuderna in piano. In 1984, he received a Ph.D. in music composition, *with distinction*, from the University of California, Berkeley, where his principal teachers were Andrew Imbrie and Olly Wilson in composition and Richard Felciano in analysis.

Professor Greenberg has composed more than 45 works for a wide variety of instrumental and vocal ensembles. Recent performances of his works have taken place in New York, San Francisco, Chicago, Los Angeles, England, Ireland, Greece, Italy, and the Netherlands, where his *Child's Play* for String Quartet was performed at the Concertgebouw of Amsterdam. He has received numerous honors, including three Nicola de Lorenzo Composition Prizes and three Meet-the-Composer Grants. Recent commissions have come from the Koussevitzky Foundation at the Library of Congress, the Alexander String Quartet, the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, San Francisco Performances, the Strata Ensemble, and the XTET ensemble. Professor Greenberg is a board member and an artistic director of COMPOSERS, INC., a composers' collective/production organization based in San Francisco. His music is published by Fallen Leaf Press and CPP/Belwin and is recorded on the *Innova* label.

Professor Greenberg has performed, taught, and lectured extensively across North America and Europe. He is currently music historian-in-residence with San Francisco Performances, where he has lectured and performed since 1994, and resident composer and music historian to National Public Radio's "Weekend All Things Considered." He has served on the faculties of the University of California at Berkeley, California State University at Hayward, and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where he chaired the Department of Music, History and Literature from 1989–2001 and served as the Director of the Adult Extension Division from 1991–1996. He has lectured for some of the most prestigious musical and arts organizations in the United States, including the San Francisco Symphony (where for 10 years, he was host and lecturer for the symphony's nationally acclaimed "Discovery Series"), the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, the Van Cliburn Foundation, and the Chautauqua Institute. He is a sought-after lecturer for businesses and business schools, speaking at such diverse organizations as the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco and the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business, and has been profiled in various major publications, including the *Wall Street Journal, Inc.* magazine, and the *London Times*.

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Please note that many musical examples are drawn from *Beethoven: The Complete Piano Sonatas* from Claude Frank's 10-CD set on the Music & Arts Programs of America label.

Beethoven's Piano Sonatas

Scope:

Beethoven's 32 piano sonatas stand as a singular body of work in the keyboard literature. What makes them unique is their organic quality. Taken together, as a single corpus, they reveal their composer's compositional and artistic development of the genre, from the terse and powerful first sonata of 1795 to the revolutionary *Hammerklavier* Sonata of 1818 and the radical last three sonatas of 1820-22. Not content to work within the constraints of a pre-existing aesthetic, Beethoven pushed the genre to extremes, artistically, compositionally and technically, eventually writing music for an "idealized" piano that did not exist in his day, one that only came into existence some 40 years after his death.

The piano was Beethoven's personal voice and his musical laboratory. Continuously innovative, by the time he had written the *Pathétique* Sonata of 1799, Beethoven had moved beyond the constraints and the ideal of the Classical style. From 1800 onward, with a whole series of amazing sonatas such as the so-called *Funeral March*, the *Moonlight*, the *Pastoral* and the *Tempest*, it was as if he were redefining the genre from piece to piece. In 1804 Beethoven composed two cornerstones of the piano repertoire, among the greatest examples of his "heroic" style, the *Waldstein* and *Appassionata* Sonatas. The late piano sonatas, beginning with op. 101 of 1816, and including the *Hammerklavier*, op. 106, and the last three sonatas, op. 109, 110 and 111, became increasingly radical in terms of their harmonic usage, form and expressive content. Perhaps, most importantly, these last five sonatas reveal that Beethoven had come to grips with the duality of his musical character—an experimental composer of the Classical era whose compositional inspiration was the great Baroque composer, Johann Sebastian Bach. This is most perfectly manifest in his final Piano Sonata in C Minor, op. 111 of 1822, the first movement of which rather perfectly reconciles the Baroque genre fugue with Classical-era sonata form and ends on a note of sublime and ethereal calm.

This course presents a chronologically-based discussion of all 32 of Beethoven's sonatas, with a great deal of in-depth analysis. WordScore Guides™ are provided in the booklets as an aid to analysis for Piano Sonata no. 1 in F Minor, op. 2, no. 1, Piano Sonata no. 8 in C Minor, op. 13 (*Pathétique*), Piano Sonata no. 23 in F Minor, op. 57 (*Appassionata*), and Piano Sonata no. 29 in Bb Major, op. 106 (*Hammerklavier*).

Lecture Nine

Motives, Bach, and a Farewell to the 18th Century

Scope: Among the more common misconceptions regarding Beethoven is that he was a “Classical–style” composer until 1803, when his hearing loss forced him to turn inward and reinvent himself as a “hero,” battling God and fate. It is true that after 1803, Beethoven’s music would occupy a place very different from that of any other music and that he would explicitly embrace a self-expressive ideal that would separate him almost completely from his contemporaries, but it is not true that the music written before 1803 existed firmly within the confines of Classicism. Beethoven’s “reinvention” in 1803 might have pushed him over the edge into compositional radicalism, but he had been walking toward that edge for years, a fact that is readily apparent in his piano sonatas, the most experimental of his early compositions.

The period from 1800 to 1802 was, as the textbooks so understate it, “pivotal for Beethoven the composer; tumultuous for Beethoven the man.” These were the years that saw Beethoven increasingly isolate himself out of fear that his hearing loss would be noticed. Throughout it all, he composed, including eight pivotal piano sonatas—op. 22, op. 26 (the so-called *Funeral March* Sonata), the two sonatas of op. 27 (the second of which is the *Moonlight* Sonata), op. 28 (the *Pastoral*), and the three sonatas of op. 31 (the second of which is the *Tempest*).

Outline

- I. Beethoven was rightly proud of his Piano Sonata no. 11 in Bb Major, op. 22 (1800). He referred to op. 22 as a “grand solo sonata” and, compared to his more modest op. 14 sonatas, the Bb is a big, four-movement work.
 - A. We will focus almost entirely on the first movement of Piano Sonata no. 11, in sonata form, in order to get a grip on Beethoven’s developing compositional priorities and the influence of Johann Sebastian Bach on his music.
 - B. We start by listening to the entire exposition straight through. As we listen, consider the following question: what constitutes “theme” in this exposition? (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 11 in Bb Major, op. 22 [1800], movement 1, exposition.)
 1. The generative “theme” of this movement is a six-note motive. (**Piano example.**)
 2. On the surface, this is a musical idea, as one writer kindly puts it, “of a neutral character.” (**Piano example.**)
 3. Beethoven mines this motive for all it’s worth; here and there using its rhythm, its harmonic shape, its melodic contour; elaborating it, fragmenting it, inverting it—building with it. The motive is pure substance, divorced entirely from “style,” and the resulting music is so entirely “of the motive” that nothing in particular “sticks out,” with the exception of the amazing sense of varied unity that pervades the movement. (**Piano example.**)
 - C. We will identify the intrinsic “parts” of this motive, then observe how Beethoven arrays these “parts” in new ways across the span of the movement.
 1. First, the motive is a rhythm, 4 sixteenth notes followed by 2 eighth notes. The effect is of potential energy, like a tightly wound spring. (**Piano example.**)
 2. Second, the motive is a rising and falling interval of a third that outlines, when we first hear it, the Bb tonic triad. (**Piano example.**)
 3. Third, the motive features something called *neighbor motion*—the movement back and forth between two adjacent pitches. (**Piano example.**)
 4. Fourth, the motive features a large-scale melodic outline, as heard in the following example. (**Piano example.**)
 - D. What Beethoven does with this motive and its permutations is astonishing. Let’s hear theme 1 in its entirety before we deconstruct it. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 11 in Bb Major, op. 22 [1800], movement 1, theme 1.)
 1. Theme 1 opens with the motive, which is then immediately repeated over a pizzicato-like octave in the bass. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 11 in Bb Major, op. 22 [1800], movement 1, theme 1, ms 1–2, beat 3.)

2. The motive then breaks free and shoots upward in a sequence that traces a rising Bb major chord using the first energetic portion (“ya-ba-da-ba-do-do”) of the motive. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 11 in Bb Major, op. 22 [1800], movement 1, theme 1, ms. 2, beat 3–downbeat 4.)
 3. An elongated version of the motive now appears. First, Beethoven alters its pitch outline slightly while retaining its rhythm, going from the first of the following examples to the second. (**Piano examples.**)
 4. Beethoven “elongates” this new version of the motive by inserting descending scalar fragments between the first and second portions of the original motive. In the following examples, we hear the original motive, the altered motive, and the altered motive elongated. (**Piano examples.**)
 5. Beethoven likes the elongated version of the motive so much that he immediately repeats it, an octave lower. (**Piano example.**)
 6. The theme comes to its conclusion via a rising sequence of the original motives, which have been elongated by prefacing them with two falling sixteenth notes, creating “wa-wa ya-ba-da-ba do.” (**Piano example.**)
 7. The theme concludes with three motives—“wa-wa ya-ba,” followed by “wa-wa ya-ba-da-ba,” and capped with “ya-ba-da-ba do.” (**Piano example.**)
 8. We hear theme 1 again in its entirety. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 11 in Bb Major, op. 22 [1800], movement 1, theme 1.)
- E. Next we turn to dissecting the modulating bridge. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 11 in Bb Major, op. 22 [1800], movement 1, modulating bridge.)
1. The opening part of the bridge is familiar enough—a sequence of the original motives rises out of the bass. (**Piano example.**)
 2. This is followed by a falling scalar line heard first in the bass, then in the treble. We listen to how it is first heard in the bass, in dotted rhythms. (**Piano example.**)
 3. This scalar descent is a direct outgrowth of the “elongated” motive heard back in theme 1. Listen to the scalar descent in the modulating bridge, with the original motive that precedes it, followed by the elongated motive from theme 1. (**Piano examples.**)
 4. The modulating bridge proceeds to play around with material derived from the motive above a sustained C, the dominant pitch of the approaching new key of F major. The modulating bridge concludes with a rising scale and a trill-like alternation of two notes. (**Piano example.**)
 5. The trill-like motive is, of course, an extrapolation and extension of the neighbor-note motion that characterizes the “motive.” (**Piano example.**)
 6. We listen to theme 1 and the modulating bridge. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 11 in Bb Major, op. 22 [1800], movement 1, theme 1 and modulating bridge.)
- F. Theme 2 is actually a *theme group*, consisting of multiple thematic parts, in this case, three.
1. The first part features a broad, rather slowly moving melody accompanied by the rising scale and trill that concluded the modulating bridge. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 11 in Bb Major, op. 22 [1800], movement 1, theme group 2, part 1.)
 2. The second part of theme group 2 features a melody consisting of short, descending phrases, each one a bit higher than the one that preceded it. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 11 in Bb Major, op. 22 [1800], movement 1, theme group 2, part 2.)
 3. The third part of theme group 2 features some brilliant passagework. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 11 in Bb Major, op. 22 [1800], movement 1, theme 2, part 3.)
 4. We will approach this theme group from the point of view of the motive, and leave harmonic and pianistic issues aside. Part 1 of theme group 2 features a broad, rather slowly moving melody. (**Piano example.**)
 5. This melody is derived from the outline of the motive. Again, we hear the motive in the first example, which outlines the pitches in the second example. (**Piano examples.**)
 6. Now we hear the beginning of theme group 2, part 1. (**Piano example.**)
 7. This is extended to create the opening phrase of theme group 2, part 1. (**Piano example.**)
 8. The second part of theme group 2 grows directly out of the first part, which itself grew out of the motive. First, we hear theme group 2, part 2. (**Piano example.**)
 9. Tracing the evolution of that melodic idea, we hear, first, the motive, followed by the motive outline, and theme group 2, part 1. (**Piano examples.**)

10. Next, we hear theme group 2, part 1, transposed; then, the transposition is elaborated, leaving theme group 2, part 2. **(Piano example.)**
- G. Theme group 2, part 3, is so full of virtuosic flash that it's easy to miss its countless references to the motive and its various permutations and progeny. For example, 39 seconds into theme group 2, we hear the following two-measure passage. **(Musical selections:** Piano Sonata no. 11 in Bb Major, op. 22 [1800], movement 1, theme 2, part 3, ms. 48–downbeat 50; movement 1, theme 2, part 3, ms 48–downbeat 50.)
1. We hear the broken octaves in the treble slowed down. **(Piano example.)**
 2. Next, we hear the melody that these broken octaves outline. **(Piano example.)**
 3. Clearly; the first four notes are drawn directly from the motive. **(Piano example.)**
 4. The motive is augmented—that is, its rhythmic values are doubled in length. **(Piano example.)**
 5. Beethoven then alters just the first pitch of that motive. We hear the conversion, and the result is repeated three times **(Piano examples.)**
- H. We could say much more about theme group 2, but we'll stop here. Clearly, everything in this theme group is derived from the inauspicious motive that began the movement! Let's hear theme group 2 in its entirety. **(Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 11 in Bb Major, op. 22 [1800], movement 1, theme group 2.)
- II. As an experiment, we will create our own melody out of the motive by doing something that Beethoven has not yet done, that is, combining two different versions of the motive to create a “composite” melody.
- A. We begin with the motive outline that was exploited to create theme group 2, parts 1 and 2. **(Piano examples.)**
1. Next, we shrink that motive down. **(Piano example.)**
 2. Then, we give it a bit of a rhythmic profile. **(Piano example.)**
 3. We then connect it to an augmented version of the motive. **(Piano example.)**
 4. We repeat the process, higher this time and with a hint of minor. **(Piano example.)**
 5. We now move the end back to major, then back to minor. **(Piano examples.)**
 6. In reality, we haven't been conducting an original experiment at all, because Beethoven does exactly this in his cadence material. Let's hear that cadence material, featuring a cadence theme that combines two different aspects of the motive. **(Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 11 in Bb Major, op. 22 [1800], movement 1, cadence material.)
- B. We now hear the entire exposition, which should make a different impression after our analysis than it did when we first heard it at the beginning of the lecture. **(Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 11 in Bb Major, op. 22 [1800], movement 1, exposition.)
- C. Keep in mind that Beethoven intended every one of the compositional details we just observed in the exposition, plus many others.
- III. We will listen to the development section straight through; however, we will identify the different parts of the development or attempt to identify motivic relationships and further motivic transformation within the development. The development section is such a motive-rich environment that virtually everything we hear can be analyzed and attributed.
- A. We hear the development section, starting with five iterations of the motive through to the appearance of theme 1 at the beginning of the recapitulation. **(Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 11 in Bb Major, op. 22 [1800], movement 1, development through theme 1 in the recapitulation.)
- B. The movement ends without a coda, and we, as listeners, are left with a striking realization at its conclusion: Beethoven has created a noble, magnificent movement of huge proportions out of almost nothing.
- IV. There is a singleness of purpose in the development of the first movement of op. 22, a powerful combination of intellect and expression unlike any other music of the Classical era but very much like the music of the High Baroque, in particular that of Johann Sebastian Bach.
- A. The Baroque era (1600–1750) was, artistically, a paradox.
1. We talk about the Baroque as being an age of expressive exuberance (as opposed to Classical-era music, which was dominated by expressive restraint).

2. On the other hand, the Baroque era was also characterized by rational thought, logic, and scientific investigation. For all its exuberance, Baroque music reflected the objective spirit of its time, with its reliance on symmetry, formality, and harmonic control.
 3. There is, then, a duality in Baroque music—expressive exuberance tempered and controlled by intellect and logic.
- B.** The majority of Baroque-era instrumental genres are monothematic; that is, they feature one theme from which everything else develops. In Baroque practice, thematic contrast usually occurred between movements, not within movements.
1. One of the reasons behind the pervasive monothematicism of this Baroque instrumental music had to do with the Baroque infatuation with logic and rationality, which created a compositional aesthetic that stressed thematic investigation.
 2. For example, the Baroque genre of *fugue* is a monothematic composition that introduces a theme—the *fugue subject*—then proceeds to dissect, fragment, recombine, and restate that theme in as many different keys and permutations as possible. A fugue is, at its essence, an exploration of the musical properties and possibilities inherent in its theme.
 3. Because everything we hear in a fugue grows out of the fugue subject, a fugue is “unified” by its monothematic nature. A fugue reflects *unity of character*—everything grows from a single, common source.
 4. A fugue is also about *continuity*: non-stop rhythmic motion and the continuous interplay of the various melodic lines that make up the fugue.
 5. To an overwhelming degree, this is what defines Baroque instrumental music: unity of character, continuity, and objective thematic investigation.
- C.** Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750) took the Baroque paradox, the duality of exuberance and control, to a new level. He united in his music the fluidity and grace of Italian melody, the intellect and compositional rigor of German technique, and his own Lutheran view of music as a serious, profoundly spiritual art.
- D.** No music touched and influenced Beethoven more deeply than Bach’s. This influence is explicitly obvious in Beethoven’s late works but is equally—if more subtly—apparent even in 1800, at this relatively early stage of Beethoven’s compositional career.
1. The only significant music teacher the Catholic-born Beethoven ever had was a Lutheran-born composer and organist named Christian Gottlob Neefe.
 2. Beethoven began his studies with Neefe in both organ and composition sometime in 1780 or 1781, when Beethoven was 10 or 11 years old. Beethoven continued to work with Neefe until he left for Vienna in November of 1792.
 3. The keyboard music of Bach was the backbone of Beethoven’s studies with Neefe, at a time when Bach’s music had otherwise fallen into almost total obscurity. Neefe recognized Beethoven’s genius from the beginning, and he “introduced” Beethoven to the greater German musical community by writing an article in which he praised, in particular, Beethoven’s playing of Bach.
 4. Nowhere is Beethoven’s synthesis of Baroque monothematicism and continuity with the dramatic contrasts and discontinuities of Classical-era sonata form more apparent than in the first movement of the Piano Sonata in Bb Major, op. 22. Beethoven’s inspiration lay deep in the past, but the way he used that inspiration in his music looked far to the future.
- V.** We will quickly sample the remaining three movements of the Piano Sonata in Bb Major.
- A.** The second movement sonata form is marked: “Slowly, with *great* expression.” The movement begins in the character of an Italian opera aria. We hear theme 1. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 11 in Bb Major, op. 22 [1800], movement 2, theme 1.)
 - B.** The minuet and trio we encounter in movement 3 is the second-to-last one we will hear in Beethoven’s piano sonatas. After op. 31, no. 3, of 1802, they will all be scherzos. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 11 in Bb Major, op. 22 [1800], movement 3, minuet opening.)
 - C.** The fourth movement rondo is marked *allegretto*, “a little fast.” (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 11 in Bb Major, op. 22 [1800], movement 4, rondo theme.)
 - D.** As Charles Rosen noted, “This sonata is his [Beethoven’s] farewell to the eighteenth century” (Rosen, p. 149). We will begin to examine Beethoven’s more radical work in the next lecture.

Lecture Ten

A Genre Redefined

Scope: From this point on in our lectures, each of Beethoven's piano sonatas will be different, in some important way, from what came before it. Late in his life, Beethoven was quoted as having said, "An artist must never stand still." This "doctrine of originality" was already operative by 1801, and we will be constant witnesses to it as we move through his subsequent piano sonatas. We'll begin, in this lecture, with the Piano Sonata no. 12 in Ab Major, op. 26, the *Funeral March* of 1801.

Outline

- I. The Piano Sonata op. 26 is significantly different from every one of Beethoven's piano sonatas that came before it. Among its differences is that it does not have a sonata form movement.
 - A. This innovation wasn't entirely new for the genre of piano sonata, but it was new for Beethoven. Like Mozart's Piano Sonata in A Major, K. 331, of 1778, Beethoven's op. 26 begins with a theme and variations form movement.
 - B. The resemblance between the two sonatas, however, ends there. Beethoven's op. 26 is a big, four-movement sonata, where Mozart's is a modest, three-movement work. Beethoven's op. 26 exhibits an amazing degree of contrast between its movements and has, as its third movement, an anguished funeral march, the likes of which Mozart would never have conceived of putting in a piano sonata!
- II. We begin with movement 1, in theme and variations form.
 - A. Beethoven's theme—in Ab major—is among the most exquisite and lyric melodies in the repertoire. It exhibits an internal phrase structure of a $a^1 b a^1$. We will listen to it in its entirety before we talk about it. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 12 in Ab Major, op. 26 [*Funeral March*, 1801], movement 1, theme.)
 - B. During the course of the theme, Beethoven makes extensive use of an effect called *subito piano*, meaning "suddenly piano." A *subito piano* is a crescendo followed suddenly by a dynamic marking of *piano*; there are seven such *subito pianos* in the theme alone. For example, we hear two of them between measures 4–8. (**Piano example.**)
 - C. The effect of the *subito pianos* is subtle but powerful; like a sudden intake of breath, they add a dramatic edge that complements and deepens the lyric expressivity of the theme. The use of such *subito pianos* will become a hallmark of Beethoven's music for the rest of his career.
 - D. Each of the five variations that follows the theme displays the same internal form as the theme itself: a $a^1 b a^1$. In his variations, Beethoven will mine the theme for certain musical elements, which he will then isolate and expand in the individual variations.
 1. For example, let's turn to variation 1, marked "*poco più mosso*," meaning "a little more movement" or, simply, "faster." Variation 1 is spun out of a cadential feature heard halfway through the theme, then again at the conclusion of the theme. (**Piano example.**)
 2. The rhythm of this cadence becomes the meat and potatoes of variation 1. (**Piano example.**)
 3. In performance, the result is a seamless connection between the end of the theme and the beginning of the first variation. Let's hear the first half of variation 1—phrases a and a^1 . (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 12 in Ab Major, op. 26 [*Funeral March*, 1801], movement 1, variation 1, a and a^1 .)
 - E. Variation 2—marked "*più animato, ma non troppo*," "more animated, but not too much"—sees the theme, now heard in the bass, alternate with accompanimental chords in the treble.
 1. The steady sixteenth-note rhythm in variation 2 was suggested in phrase a^1 of the theme.
 2. We hear a back-to-back comparison: first, the first two measures of phrase a^1 as heard in the theme, followed by the opening measures of variation 2. (**Piano examples.**)
 3. Now we hear phrases a and a^1 of variation 2. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 12 in Ab Major, op. 26 [*Funeral March*, 1801], movement 1, variation 2, phrases a and a^1 .)
 - F. Variation 3—marked "*più sostenuto*," "more sustained"—occupies the center point of the movement, and it is in this variation that Beethoven moves farthest away from the theme in terms of both mode and mood.

1. This third variation is in Ab minor, and in it, the theme is syncopated—that is, played off the beat—and is accompanied by harmonies that fall on the beats.
 2. The effect—despite the fact that this variation, like the theme and all the other variations, is in triple meter—is almost march-like. The resulting mood is almost that of a funeral march, no small thing given that the entire third movement of this sonata is a funeral march in the key of Ab minor. Undoubtedly, this variation is a subtle harbinger of things to come.
 3. We listen to variation 3 in its entirety, a a¹ b a¹. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 12 in Ab Major, op. 26 [*Funeral March*, 1801], movement 1, variation 3.)
- G. Where this third variation in Ab minor is dark and heavy in tone, the fourth variation, in Ab major, is bright and light.
1. Its “lightness” stems from the sense of “lift” generated by its upward-leaping melodic contour, something that was suggested by the opening of phrase b of the theme.
 2. We hear another back-to-back comparison: first, the opening of phrase b of the theme, followed by variation 4, phrases a and a¹. (**Musical selections:** Piano Sonata no. 12 in Ab Major, op. 26 [*Funeral March*, 1801], movement 1, theme, phrase b; movement 1, variation 4, phrases a and a¹.)
- H. The fifth and final variation has the triplet-dominated, perpetual-motion feel of a *barcarolle*, a “boat song.”
1. Despite the rhythmic activity of the accompaniment, this variation—in terms of its calm, quiet lyricism—is the closest to the theme of any of the variations and serves to “bookend” the movement in a satisfying manner.
 2. A gentle, 15-measure coda follows. The movement concludes with a lightness and calm that is unique for a first movement in a Beethoven piano sonata.
 3. We listen to variation 5 in its entirety, followed by the coda. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 12 in Ab Major, op. 26 [*Funeral March*, 1801], variation 5 and coda.)
- I. Where in this first movement is the contrast, the conflict that we would expect to hear in a Classical-era piano sonata? They are nowhere to be found. The year is 1801, the composer is Beethoven, and as far as his piano sonatas are concerned, the Classical era ended with the 18th century. Op. 26 clearly represents a genre redefined.
- III. The second movement is an awesome scherzo, filled with thematic atomization, syncopations, harmonic invention, and pianistic brilliance.
- A. The opening phrases waft upward. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 12 in Ab Major, op. 26 [*Funeral March*, 1801], movement 2, scherzo, phrase 1.)
- B. The remainder of this opening scherzo takes on the character of a development section followed by a recapitulation.
1. The “developmental” passage fragments and syncopates the scherzo theme and concludes with an extraordinary prolongation of a single, dissonant harmony. The dissonance isn’t resolved until the recapitulatory passage, which features the scherzo theme, along with a brilliant, running accompaniment, first above, then below.
 2. We listen to the remainder of the scherzo without the repeat we would hear in performance. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 12 in Ab Major, op. 26 [*Funeral March*, 1801], movement 2, scherzo, “development” and “recapitulation.”)
- C. The trio offers a bit of calm in this otherwise extremely active musical environment. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 12 in Ab Major, op. 26 [*Funeral March*, 1801], movement 2, trio.)
- D. A four-measure transition tilts the music back toward the scherzo. We hear the blistering conclusion of this second movement. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 12 in Ab Major, op. 26 [*Funeral March*, 1801], movement 2, scherzo da capo.)
- IV. With movement 3, the funeral march, we have arrived at the heart of the sonata; this movement is so striking and different from what we would expect to hear in a piano sonata that it renders everything we’ve heard to this point as merely preparation.
- A. Beethoven marks the movement *Marcia funebre sulla morte d’un eroe*—“Funeral march on the death of a hero.” The Beethoven literature seems to agree that Beethoven’s “hero” is an imaginary one, though given

Beethoven's autobiographical proclivities, it wouldn't be impossible that he was building a musical monument to himself.

- B.** Over the years, various annotators have claimed that this piano sonata movement is essentially a “study” for the groundbreaking and heartrending second-movement funeral march of Beethoven's Third Symphony, op. 55, of 1803. Let's sample the opening of that symphonic movement, written two years after the piano sonata. (**Musical selection:** Symphony no. 3 in Eb Major, op. 55 [*Eroica*], movement 2, opening.)
- C.** I do not believe that the Piano Sonata op. 26 was a “study” for the funeral march of the Third Symphony, partly because that assertion implies that Beethoven was already thinking about his Third Symphony, written in 1803, when he was composing the op. 26 piano sonata in 1801, before he composed his Second Symphony of 1802.
- D.** We do know that, from the start, Beethoven intended to include in op. 26 some sort of program music—what he referred to as a *charakterstück*, a “characteristic piece.” That he settled on a funeral march probably can be attributed to an opera by Ferdinand Paer entitled *Achille* that came out in 1801, at just the time that Beethoven was working on his op. 26 piano sonata. Paer's *Achille* features a huge funeral march episode in commemoration of the fallen hero, Patroclus.
- E.** The movement is in *ternary form*—that is, three-part form—A B A, like a scherzo. Beethoven indicates that the movement should be played *andante maestoso*, “walking speed and majestically.”
1. As we would expect in a funeral march, the mode is minor (Ab minor), most of the movement is heard low on the keyboard, and the music is dominated by dotted rhythms. We'll examine this movement as a “character piece”—a movement of pure program music in an otherwise non-programmatic piano sonata. We begin by listening to the first third of the movement, section A. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 12 in Ab Major, op. 26 [*Funeral March*, 1801], movement 3, A.)
 2. The middle, contrasting section is, programmatically, quite clear: we hear drum roles punctuated by “salutes fired over the grave.” (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 12 in Ab Major, op. 26 [*Funeral March*, 1801], movement 3, B.)
 3. A varied reprise of section A follows, which itself is followed by a brief coda.
 4. In the coda, Beethoven completely transcends the “generic” expressive content of the funeral march genre.
 5. The entire coda is underlain by a thrumming tonic Ab pedal tone. The *fortissimo* outbursts of the funeral march proper are here, in the coda, replaced by quiet descending and ascending lines.
 6. Most important and most striking is what Beethoven does as the end of the movement approaches. The cadential chords that precede the tonic chord are in Ab minor, but the resolutions—the tonic chords at the end of the cadences—are Ab major chords!
 7. We listen first to a cadential formula completely in Ab minor, followed by an example of what Beethoven does in his cadential chords. The approach to the cadence is in Ab minor, but the resolution is in Ab major. (**Piano examples.**)
 8. Let's hear the coda and the conclusion of the movement. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 12 in Ab Major, op. 26 [*Funeral March*, 1801], movement 3, coda.)
- V.** Gustav Nottebohm, the musicologist who did such pioneering work codifying and studying Beethoven's sketches, wrote in 1887 apropos of the third and fourth movements of the Piano Sonata, op. 26: “How is one to interpret the juxtaposition of two so contrasting [movements] as the funeral march... and the hurdy-gurdy finale?” (Drake, p. 122.) (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 12 in Ab Major, op. 26 [*Funeral March*, 1801], movement 4, rondo theme.)
- A.** Indeed, how are we to interpret the juxtaposition of these two contrasting movements? We will not be witness to this degree of contrast between movements in Beethoven's later works, which will tend to be more integrated, both structurally and expressively.
1. Here, however, still relatively early in his career, Beethoven was experimenting with what we might call “the considered non sequitur” and the expressive shock value that comes from juxtaposing a slow movement of expressive weight with a dance-like movement that seems to flippantly dismiss the fundamental questions raised by the preceding movement. Is this, perhaps, a Beethovenian statement that “life must go on”?

2. There is also a technical explanation for the degree of contrast between movements in op. 26. By omitting entirely from the sonata any sonata form movement, Beethoven precluded the sort of dramatic interaction and potential “struggle” that sonata form would have provided in such a movement. As such, the contrasts in this sonata are between, rather than within, the movements.
 3. Hans von Bülow, writing in 1893, takes this issue of contrast between the movements in op. 26 entirely too far, suggesting that the order of the movements in op. 26 is optional! Of course, we would not consider re-ordering the movements in the 21st century.
 4. The funeral march movement is the heart and soul of the sonata; it must be approached slowly, from a distance. The lyric stasis of the first movement theme and variations creates a calmness, a quietude that is a necessary preparation for the darkness and introspective quality of the funeral march.
 5. And the rondo finale offers the necessary “relief” from the oppression of the funeral march without allowing us to forget the impression it made.
- B. Returning to the fourth-movement rondo finale, we find a perpetual-motion musical machine, marked by almost continuous sixteenth-note rhythms for the duration of its 177 measures. The rondo theme—in Ab major—is more a shape or a figure than a tune, consisting of a single motive that does a sort of “crab-walk” down the keyboard. **(Piano example. Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 12 in Ab Major, op. 26 [*Funeral March*, 1801], movement 4, rondo theme.)
 - C. The first contrasting episode—most of which takes place in the key of Eb major—is rather brief and offers only the slightest degree of contrast, as the rondo theme motive continues unabated in the accompaniment. Let’s hear the first contrasting episode, followed by the return of the rondo theme. **(Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 12 in Ab Major, op. 26 [*Funeral March*, 1801], movement 4, first contrasting episode and rondo theme.)
 - D. The second contrasting episode is undoubtedly the passage that inspired Gustav Nottebohm to call this movement a “hurdy-gurdy finale.” In this episode, the rondo theme motive ascends—in C minor—over a rustic, rudimentary, open-fifth accompaniment. **(Piano example.)**
 - E. The “hurdy-gurdy” episode concludes with a single line made up of rondo theme motives that segues seamlessly back to the rondo theme. Let’s hear this second contrasting episode and the restatement of the rondo theme that follows. **(Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 12 in Ab Major, op. 26 [*Funeral March*, 1801], movement 4, second contrasting episode and rondo theme.)
 - F. From here, it’s a race to the finish line with a varied reprise of the first contrasting episode followed by the coda, in which the rondo theme motive sinks deeper into the bass of the piano until it disappears! Let’s hear the conclusion of the movement, starting with the varied reprise of the first contrasting episode, followed by the coda. **(Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 12 in Ab Major, op. 26 [*Funeral March*, 1801], movement 4, conclusion.)
- VI. The Piano Sonata no. 12 in Ab Major, op. 26, is an experimental artwork. Never before had a Classical-era piano sonata exhibited such a degree of contrast between its component movements. That large-scale contrast is the essential story line of this sonata, with the funeral march as the expressive anchor.
- A. Conversely, Beethoven minimizes the degree of contrast within each of the four movements. There is no sonata form movement—with its internal contrasts and conflicts—anywhere to be found in the piece. Beethoven begins the sonata with a theme and variations form movement, a formal procedure that offers no internal structural “contrast” whatsoever.
 - B. Likewise, the second movement scherzo and third movement funeral march display minimal internal contrasts. And in his fourth movement rondo, Beethoven minimizes internal contrast by building his contrasting episodes from the same motive that characterizes the rondo theme itself.
 - C. Without a doubt, this is a new sort of music. From here on, Beethoven will never again be content in his piano sonatas to work within the large-scale structural and aesthetic confines of the Classical era. If Beethoven’s first 10 piano sonatas pushed the envelope; if his 11th piano sonata, op. 22, was a farewell to Classicism and the 18th century, then op. 26 is a genuinely experimental, avant-garde work.

Lecture Eleven

Sonata *quasi una fantasia*—The *Moonlight*

Scope: Beethoven called each of the two sonatas published as op. 27 a “Sonata *quasi una fantasia*,” meaning, literally, a “sonata sort of like an improvisation.” With this title, he may have been attempting to stay one step ahead of the critics, who were likely to decry that these two new piano “pieces” were certainly not sonatas! At the same time, by 1801, both the aristocracy and the middle class alike had come to consider Beethoven one of Vienna’s leading musicians, despite what the critics might say. Of course, also in 1801, Beethoven was struggling with his hearing loss and the tremendous emotional pain it was causing him. As we will see in this lecture, it is almost impossible not to relate this struggle with op. 27, no. 2, the *Moonlight* Sonata.

Outline

- I. Referring to Beethoven’s hearing loss, musicologist Timothy Jones asks:

“Where better to look for a [biographical] program than in the heightened subjectivity of fantasy or, failing that, a sonata *quasi una fantasia*? Perhaps the “*Moonlight* Sonata” is an expression of Beethoven’s sorrow [over the] precious loss [of] his hearing? Why are the dynamics of the sonata’s first movement unprecedentedly suppressed to a constant piano or softer?” (**Piano example.**)
- A. Timothy Jones continues: “Why does the melody emerge from, and re-submerge into, an under-articulated accompanimental continuum?” (**Piano example.**)
- B. “Why is the movement centered on low sonorities, and the extreme treble reached only once, in a gesture of the utmost despair?” (**Piano example.**)
- C. “Perhaps this is a representation of Beethoven’s impaired auditory world, and—at the same time—a lament for his loss. Why does the sonata’s [third and final movement, the] *presto agitato*, seem to cover the same ground as the first movement, but with a prevailing mood of manic rage, rather than of melancholy?” (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 14 in C# Minor, op. 27, no. 2 [*Moonlight*], movement 3 opening.)
- D. “Perhaps the contrast [between the first and third movements] reflects the two significant states of mind that emerge from Beethoven’s letters at the time?” (Jones, p. 14).
- E. Returning to the title of the op. 27 sonatas, “Sonata *quasi una fantasia*,” what does it mean from a musical point of view?
 1. As a musical genre, a *fantasy*—like a *rhapsody* and an *impromptu*—is a musical composition that has the character of an improvisation. Such a “composition” has no fixed number of sections, and in general, each of its component sections is characterized by its own melodic and/or rhythmic figuration or pattern. For example, we hear the non-stop triplets of the first movement of op. 27, no. 2. (**Piano example.**)
 2. In a fantasy, all the component sections are played continuously, without a pause. In the spirit of the fantasy, Beethoven concludes every movement but the last of the op. 27 sonatas with the instruction “*attacca subito*,” meaning “begin [or ‘attack’] the next movement immediately, without a pause.”
 3. The spirit of the fantasy is that of spontaneous music, music that emerges directly from the heart through the fingers without the intercession of “intellect.” This spirit of the fantasy lay close to Beethoven’s heart.
 4. According to those individuals who heard them, Beethoven’s improvisations—his pianistic fantasies—were held together, not by the same formal procedures as a composition, but as a narrative of affective states, a succession of connected and interrelated emotional states.
 5. Without a doubt, Beethoven wanted to bring to his op. 27 sonatas something of that narrative of affective states that so characterized his improvisations, his most intimate and personal music making.
- F. Beethoven began to work seriously on the sonatas of op. 27 immediately after the premiere of his ballet, *The Creatures of Prometheus*, which took place on March 28, 1801. However, there is evidence in his sketchbooks that Beethoven actually conceptualized the op. 27 sonatas while he was composing the ballet.
 1. The ballet—as a piece of narrative, theatrical music—moves non-stop through its component sections, none of which, after the overture, is in sonata form.

2. Inspired by the ballet, it would seem that Beethoven decided to employ this same sort of non-stop dramatic flow in his op. 27 piano sonatas. The theatricality evident in op. 27 constitutes yet another redefinition of the genre of piano sonata, now filtered through the experience of a stage spectacle.
- G. There is also evidence that, musically, the first movement of the *Moonlight Sonata* was inspired by a passage from Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni* of 1787, specifically, the deathly and funereal music that follows Don Giovanni's murder of the Commendatore in Act I, scene 1. Let's hear that bit of music from Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. (**Musical selection:** Mozart, *Don Giovanni*, K. 527, act I, scene 1, Commendatore's death music.)
1. Beethoven copied this passage down in a sketchbook, transposing it from the key of F minor to the key of C# minor, which is also the key of op. 27, no. 2. We listen to Beethoven's postlude. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 14 in C# Minor, op. 27, no. 2 [*Moonlight*], movement 1, postlude.)
 2. Certainly, Beethoven captures in the first movement of the *Moonlight* the spirit of pain and mourning explicit in the passage from Mozart's *Don Giovanni*.
- II. The first movement of the *Moonlight Sonata* is marked "*adagio sostenuto*," meaning, "slowly and sustained."
- A. We can ascribe no particular form to the movement. The big sonata form movement, which usually comes first in a "conventional" piano sonata, will come last in the *Moonlight*. For all of its beauty and fame, this "*adagio sostenuto*" is as odd and striking a sonata first movement as any we'll find in the repertoire. The musical texture consists of three parts: deep octaves in the bottom of the piano, rolling arpeggiated chords in the middle, and a lean and spare melody characterized by funeral march-like dotted rhythms above. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 14 in C# Minor, op. 27, no. 2 [*Moonlight*], movement 1 opening.)
- B. The resemblance of this movement to the Prelude in C Major from Book I of Johann Sebastian Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* is more than striking. (**Musical selection:** Bach, *Well-Tempered Clavier*, Book I, Prelude in C Major, opening.) In both the Beethoven and the Bach, the essential "melodic" element of the movement is an arpeggiated harmonic progression.
- C. The first movement of the *Moonlight Sonata* must be heard on a fortepiano to be properly appreciated. At the beginning of the movement, Beethoven writes in Italian: "This piece must be played throughout with the greatest delicacy and... without the dampers." In other words, the entire movement is to be played with the "sustain" pedal pushed down and held for the duration.
1. As we hear in this example, this can't really be done on a modern grand piano. (**Piano example.**)
 2. However, if we hear this movement played and pedaled on a fortepiano, the effect is entirely different. On the smaller, lighter instrument, the music doesn't become muddled. Instead, there's an amazing sense of resonance and echo, as undamped strings quietly vibrate in sympathy with the struck strings. (**Musical selection** [played on a replica fortepiano]: Sonata no. 14 in C# Minor, op. 27, no. 2 [*Moonlight*], movement 1, ms. 15–downbeat 23.)
- D. This movement would seem to be, as one reviewer wrote, "hewn from a single piece of marble." There are no thematic contrasts to be heard in it, and the steady-state triplets that characterize virtually every measure imbue it with an utterly singular rhythmic consistency.
1. What drives the movement is its harmonic plan, one that shifts slowly but continuously, from C# minor to E major, E minor to C major, B minor to B major, and so forth, until finally coming to rest back in C# minor.
 2. The spare, almost fragmentary melodic material creates the state of aching, quiet melancholy that characterizes the movement as a whole. Despite its outward simplicity, it is as radical a piano sonata movement as Beethoven had yet composed.
- III. Beethoven labels the second movement "*allegretto*," "a little fast." Given its triple meter, its large-scale A B A¹ structure, and all the small internal repeats within the A and B sections, the temptation to call the movement a scherzo is almost overwhelming. However, in terms of its spirit, mood, and leisurely tempo, the second movement is best perceived as a lyric interlude—an *intermezzo*—between two profoundly tragic outer movements.
- A. We will listen to the opening A section of the movement before we talk about key area and its connection to the first movement. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 14 in C# Minor, op. 27, no. 2 [*Moonlight*], movement 2, A.)

- B. The second movement is in the key of Db major, Db being, enharmonically, the same pitch as C#. The first movement ended on a low, funereal C# minor chord, while the second movement begins immediately on a Db major harmony. **(Piano examples.)**
- C. The sudden move from minor to major, from low to high, should come as a distinct shock, yet the fact that C# minor and Db major share the same tonic pitch creates a connection that makes the transition from the first movement to the second effortless. **(Piano examples.)**
- D. In fact, because there is no pause between movements and because the first movement featured no contrast of its own, we perceive this second movement as being a continuation of the first, as a contrasting element in a larger formal scheme, rather than as a discrete movement. This is an essential part of the “fantasy” element of the sonata; these movements must appear to be connected, if we are to perceive the narrative of affective states that Beethoven is attempting to achieve.
- D. The second movement *allegretto* seems to “go so well” with the first movement because of its motivic connections to the first; we hear something of the former existing in the latter, and we perceive a sense of belonging, despite the tremendous expressive differences between the two movements. **(Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 14 in C# Minor, op. 27, no. 2 [*Moonlight*], movement 2, B and A¹.)

IV. After the calm, quiet Db major chord at the conclusion of the second movement, the ferocious, string-snapping first theme of the third movement whirls out of the bottom of the piano. We’ll listen to this first theme of the third movement sonata form before we talk about its connections to the first and second movements. **(Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 14 in C# Minor, op. 27, no. 2 [*Moonlight*], movement 3, theme 1.)

- A. This third movement—back in the home key of C# minor—grows out of the conclusion of the second movement the same way the second movement grew out of the conclusion of the first.
 - 1. The second movement ends with a Db major chord; in the following example, notice the Db in the very low bass. **(Piano example.)**
 - 2. The third movement begins with the same note in the bass—now notated as a C#. **(Piano example.)**
 - 3. This low C# is followed by a rising C# minor arpeggio, effectively switching the mode back to minor. **(Piano example.)**
 - 4. The tonic pitch, whether we choose to call it C# or Db, is the same in all three movements. What changes between the movements is the mode. In the following examples, we hear movement 1 ending in C# minor, movement 2 ending in Db major, and movement 3 ending back in C# minor. **(Piano examples.)**
- B. At the beginning of this lecture, we observed that the third movement of the *Moonlight* covers the same “musical ground” as the first, although the third movement will feature a prevailing mood of manic rage, rather than that of ruminative melancholy. A comparison between the openings of the first and third movements bears this out.
 - 1. Thematically, the opening of the first movement is “about” the key of C# minor and the arpeggiation of a C# minor triad, and the opening of the first theme of the third movement is thematically the same. **(Piano examples.)**
 - 2. Likewise, the descending bass line that begins the first movement immediately casts a tragic, funereal pall over the music, and the same sort of descending bass line initiates the fourth movement. **(Piano examples.)**
 - 3. The resemblances between the first and third movements continue to stack up until we begin to realize that the first movement, like the Bach Prelude we sampled earlier, is truly the prelude to the third movement, with the second movement acting as an intermezzo between the funereal grief of the first movement and the explosive storm of the third movement.
- C. Let’s hear the exposition of the third movement in its entirety. The second theme—in the key of G# minor—offers no rest or relief; it begins 27 seconds into the excerpt. The agitated cadence theme begins 59 seconds into the excerpt. **(Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 14 in C# Minor, op. 27, no. 2 [*Moonlight*], movement 3, exposition.)
- D. The development section begins with theme 1 in C# major, though it quickly moves on to a lengthy and incredibly dramatic development of theme 2 in various minor keys. We hear the development section, followed by theme 1 in the recapitulation. **(Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 14 in C# Minor, op. 27, no. 2 [*Moonlight*], movement 3, development and recapitulation, theme 1.)

- E. The coda begins with theme 1, heard in the subdominant key of F# minor, which devolves into a series of impassioned arpeggiated dissonances, *fortissimo*! (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 14 in C# Minor, op. 27, no. 2 [*Moonlight*], movement 3, coda, part 1.)
1. Part 2 of the coda features theme 2 in the home key of C# minor. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 14 in C# Minor, op. 27, no. 2 [*Moonlight*], movement 3, coda, part 2.)
 2. Part 3 of the coda sees a series of arpeggios turn into a genuinely cadenza-like passage, yet another of the “fantasy-like” aspects of this sonata. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 14 in C# Minor, op. 27, no. 2 [*Moonlight*], movement 3, coda, part 3.)
 3. The fourth and final part of the coda sees the cadence material return quietly, followed by a ferocious series of C# minor arpeggios derived from theme 1. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 14 in C# Minor, op. 27, no. 2 [*Moonlight*], movement 3, coda, part 4.)
- V. The *Moonlight* Sonata attained instant popularity in Beethoven’s lifetime and remains one of the most famous pieces of piano music in the repertoire to this day.

Lecture Twelve

Lesser Siblings and a Pastoral Interlude

Scope: From the moment it was published in 1802, Beethoven's *Moonlight* Sonata became one of his most famous and popular compositions. Although he was pleased with its commercial success, Beethoven was also aware that the *Moonlight*'s popularity would eclipse many other of his works that he believed were of equal worth, and that is certainly true in the case of the *Moonlight*'s sister composition, op. 27, no. 1.

Like the *Moonlight*, op. 27, no. 1, is labeled as a "Sonata *quasi una fantasia*." In fact, op. 27, no. 1, is much more "fantasy-like" than the *Moonlight*, in that the same thematic material reappears regularly during the course of its four movements. The first movement continues the assault on the traditional Classical sonata template that Beethoven began in the *Funeral March* Sonata, op. 26, that is, beginning a piano sonata with something other than a sonata form movement. Even more, in both the op. 27 sonatas, Beethoven began to experiment with moving much of the dramatic locus of the work from the first movement to the last. In this lecture, the "hook" for our examination of op. 27, no. 1, will be the unification of all the movements of a sonata.

Outline

- I. The first movement of op. 27, no. 1, is an idiosyncratic construct that has been variously analyzed as a three-part structure, a theme and variations form movement, and a hybrid of theme and variations and rondo.
 - A. Beethoven begins by stating a theme, which we will call A. The next section is a variation of the theme, A¹. If this movement were a true theme and variations form, each subsequent section of music would be another variation, but that's not what Beethoven does.
 1. Following the first variation—A¹—Beethoven returns to the theme, more or less as originally heard, just as we would return to the original theme in a rondo form movement following the first contrasting episode.
 2. Following this thematic restatement, a second variation of the theme ensues, followed again by the theme in its original form, a brief coda, then an *attacca subito*—a "sudden attack"—into the second movement.
 3. The overall form is theme–variation 1–theme–variation 2–theme and coda. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 13 in Eb Major, op. 27, no. 1, movement 1, theme.)
 - B. This *andante* theme is not at all dramatic, and over the years, critics have attacked it for being "trivial" and "unworthy" of Beethoven, but with Beethoven, we must remember that it's not so much the theme that is important, but what he does with the theme.
 - C. The "theme" here in the first movement is primarily "about" a simple harmonic progression—an alternation of tonic and dominant harmonies—that will be extended and elaborated in the two variations that follow. (**Piano example.**)
 1. Variation 1 (or, in rondo form, the first contrasting episode) elaborates the admittedly "skeletal" harmonic structure of the theme and features, during its second half, a rather shocking pivot modulation from the tonic Eb major to C major. We will hear variation 1, followed by the beginning of the return to the original version of the theme. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 13 in Eb Major, op. 27, no. 1, movement 1, variation 1 and theme return.)
 2. The second contrasting episode, or variation 2, is marked "*allegro*" and is characterized by brilliant sixteenth-note sextuplets (groups of six notes). This episode/variation takes its cue from the first episode/variation and is almost entirely in the key of C major except at its conclusion, when it modulates back to the home key of Eb major for the final statement of the theme. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 13 in Eb Major, op. 27, no. 1, movement 1, variation 2 and theme opening.)

- II. The second movement, marked “*allegro molto e vivace*”—“very fast and lively”—is a full-blown, three-part scherzo and trio in C minor. It is also almost devoid of anything we might call a “thematic melody”; “theme,” in this movement, is strictly a function of rhythm and harmonic progression.
- In Lecture Eleven, we observed that in a fantasy, each section will generally be characterized by its own melodic figuration and/or rhythmic pattern. Certainly that’s true in the second movement of op. 27, no. 1, where rhythmic pattern and chord progression constitute, together, the “theme” of the movement. As we listen to the opening scherzo in its entirety, be aware that the “theme” here is a function of broken harmonies and a rhythmic pattern. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 13 in Eb Major, op. 27, no. 1, movement 2, scherzo.)
 - Though the trio section introduces the most fragmentary bit of thematic “melody,” it is still, at bottom, about harmony and rhythm, in this case, rhythmic displacement and the almost comic sense of confusion that comes with that displacement. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 13 in Eb Major, op. 27, no. 1, movement 2, trio.)
 - A rather ferocious return to the scherzo follows, and the movement ends in C minor, with the notation “*attacca subito l’adagio*,” “immediately attack the third movement *adagio*.”
- III. The essentially “a-melodic” second movement is a perfect setup for the third movement *adagio con espressione*—“slowly, with expression”—which has the character of a single, continuous aria for piano.
- Let’s hear the opening of the third movement, set in Ab major. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 13 in Eb Major, op. 27, no. 1, movement 3, opening.)
 - This magnificent third movement concludes with a quiet and graceful cadenza that leads directly into the fourth movement, a rondo. As in the *Moonlight* Sonata, Beethoven has saved his most important, intellectual, and dramatic musical ideas for the final movement. We will hear the cadenza that concludes the third movement, the *attacca subito* into the fourth movement, and the brilliant fourth movement rondo theme. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 13 in Eb Major, op. 27, no. 1, movement 3, conclusion, and movement 4, rondo theme.)
- IV. Brilliant and non-stop, the fourth movement is more than a capstone to the sonata; like the last movement of the *Moonlight*, it is also a summation of what has gone before it, both pianistically and thematically.
- The overall form of the movement is A (the rondo theme), B (first contrasting episode), A (first restatement of the rondo theme), C (development section based on the rondo theme), A (second restatement of the rondo theme), B (a reprise of the first contrasting episode, heard now in the tonic key of Eb major), and a coda—A B A C A B + coda.
 - This form is often referred to as a *rondo-sonata*, because the first contrasting section (B) returns near the end in the tonic key, as would the second theme of a sonata form, and because the second contrasting episode (C) is perceived as a development section. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 13 in Eb Major, op. 27, no. 1, movement 4, first contrasting episode and rondo theme opening.)
 - The second contrasting episode (C) is a development section that begins with an almost fugue-like exploration of the rondo theme. This is the first really “piano sonata-like” music we have heard in op. 27, no. 1; it’s the sort of developmental construction we ordinarily would have expected to hear in a piano sonata first movement. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 13 in Eb Major, op. 27, no. 1, movement 4, second contrasting episode and rondo theme opening.)
 - The reprise of B—the first contrasting episode—follows and comes to a sudden and unexpected standstill on an open cadence and a pause. We, as an audience, wonder what is to follow.
 - What follows is Beethoven’s surprising coda: a moment of sublime tranquility occurs with a return to the opening of the third movement *adagio*, now heard in the tonic key of Eb major. A graceful cadenza concludes the quotation, and the opening of the rondo theme returns, *presto*—“very fast”—bringing the sonata to its conclusion. Let’s hear the conclusion of the reprise of B, the open cadence and pause, and the coda, beginning with the slow, third movement quotation and ending with the *presto*. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 13 in Eb Major, op. 27, no. 1, movement 4, B, conclusion and coda.)
- V. On the surface, Beethoven’s Piano Sonata no. 15 in D Major, op. 28, (*Pastoral*), would seem to be a “consolidation” after such experimental works as the *Funeral March* Sonata, op. 26, and the two sonatas “*quasi*

una fantasia” of op. 27.

- A. Certainly, the formal layout of op. 28 betrays no experimental impulse: it is a four-movement sonata with a first movement sonata form, a second movement andante, a third movement scherzo, and a fourth movement rondo. However, it is also an experimental work for Beethoven, in which he attempts to wed the generic elements of pastoral music with the compositional rigor and artistic seriousness of the piano sonata.
- B. Our approach to the Piano Sonata op. 28 will be to point out those aspects of pastoral tradition that Beethoven uses in the sonata and show how he reconciles that tradition with the compositional rigor and substance of a piano sonata.

VI. Beethoven makes his “pastoral intent” known from the first measure of the first movement.

- A. We hear that first measure in the following example. Note that the movement is in triple meter. (**Piano example**.)
- B. We hear a repeated pitch, a drone, a pedal note, a tonic D that, once begun, is repeated on almost every beat for 39 consecutive measures—the entire duration of the first theme. Let’s hear theme 1 in its entirety, focusing on this ubiquitous, bagpipe-like drone. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 15 in D Major, op. 28, [*Pastoral*], movement 1, theme 1.)
- C. As we listen to the theme again, focus on the theme itself—a gentle, lyric, and spacious melody of great dignity. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 15 in D Major, op. 28, [*Pastoral*], movement 1, theme 1.)
- D. The sense of spaciousness that characterizes theme 1 is present in the entire first movement. Beethoven creates this spaciousness in two ways.
 - 1. First, the movement displays relatively slow harmonic turnover, meaning that the harmonies change slowly. This slow harmonic turnover imbues the music with a tremendous sense of leisure.
 - 2. Second, Beethoven creates a sense of spaciousness by immediately repeating and embellishing certain phrases, thereby lengthening those phrases in a manner not typical of his usually terse and compact mode of speech. For example, the modulating bridge that immediately follows theme 1 begins with two simple, straightforward phrases. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 15 in D Major, op. 28, [*Pastoral*], movement 1, modulating bridge.)
 - 3. Rather than move on from there, Beethoven repeats and embellishes those two phrases, adding a line in running eighth notes. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 15 in D Major, op. 28, [*Pastoral*], movement 1, modulating bridge.)
- E. We move from the spacious, non-dramatic modulating bridge to the development section, a tour-de-force of thematic fragmentation!
 - 1. The development section begins with the first half of theme 1 heard twice—first in G major, then in G minor. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 15 in D Major, op. 28, [*Pastoral*], movement 1, development opening.)
 - 2. Beethoven now fragments the theme by isolating and sequencing just the second half of the thematic phrase. (**Piano example**.)
 - 3. This phrase then bounces from the treble to the midrange to the bass of the piano. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 15 in D Major, op. 28, [*Pastoral*], movement 1, development section.)
 - 4. This four-measure thematic fragment is now further broken down into a two-measure fragment. (**Piano example. Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 15 in D Major, op. 28, [*Pastoral*], movement 1, development section.)
 - 5. This two-measure fragment is, in turn, broken down into a one-measure fragment that is heard over and over again. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 15 in D Major, op. 28, [*Pastoral*], movement 1, development section.)
 - 6. Fragmented to virtually nothing, the theme disappears entirely as slowly descending chords dissipate the energy over a long-repeated F# pedal in the bass. Three quiet, isolated phrases follow, redirecting the harmony back toward D major for the recapitulation. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 15 in D Major, op. 28, [*Pastoral*], movement 1, development section, conclusion, and recapitulation, theme 1.)
- F. In terms of its motivic wizardry, the development section is pure Beethoven, yet the “style” of the development section—with its relatively slow harmonic turnover and constant repetition of simple musical ideas—is pure “pastoral” music.

- VII.** The second movement is the least outwardly “pastoral” one in the sonata. It is a three-part, A–B–A¹-form movement. Section A is a march in D minor; section B is a playful passage that alternates dotted rhythm chords with skittering, descending melody lines; and A¹ is a highly embellished version of the opening march in D minor. We will sample the opening of the movement, section A, the march in D minor. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 15 in D Major, op. 28, [*Pastoral*], movement 2, A [march in D minor].)
- VIII.** The third movement scherzo theme consists of four descending F#s, followed by a quirky cadential idea, itself repeated four times. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 15 in D Major, op. 28, [*Pastoral*], movement 3, scherzo, opening.)
- A.** That is almost the entire substance of the scherzo, except that, over the course of the scherzo, the four descending F#s turn into four descending thirds, then four descending sixths, and finally, four *fortissimo* descending chords. (**Piano examples.**)
 - B.** We listen to the scherzo in its entirety. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 15 in D Major, op. 28, [*Pastoral*], movement 3, scherzo.)
- IX.** The fourth movement rondo is the most explicitly pastoral in the sonata. The rondo theme is a simple, rustic tune introduced with and accompanied by a bagpipe-like drone. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 15 in D Major, op. 28, [*Pastoral*], movement 4, rondo theme.)
- A.** This fourth movement has a large-scale form of A (the rondo theme), B (first contrasting episode), A (restatement of the rondo theme), C (second contrasting episode), A (second restatement of the rondo theme), B (first contrasting episode, now heard in the tonic key of D major), and a coda.
 - B.** We advance immediately to the second contrasting episode (C). The bagpipe-like drone that introduced and accompanied the rondo theme moves into the soprano, and slowly, more and more melodic material is appended to it. Despite the harmonically “static” nature of this episode, the piling on of layers of new material drives it to a tremendous climax. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 15 in D Major, op. 28, [*Pastoral*], movement 4, C [second contrasting episode] and rondo theme restatement.)
 - C.** The movement and the sonata end with a fabulous coda in two parts. In the first part, a bagpipe-like passage is followed by a series of upward-rippling arpeggios that pause on an open cadence in the tonic key of D major. Part 2 of the coda—marked “*più allegro*” (“faster, faster”)—features some incredibly fast passagework in the treble, heard over the bagpipe drone played in octaves in the bass. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 15 in D Major, op. 28, [*Pastoral*], movement 4, coda.)
 - D.** For all of its Classical organization Beethoven’s Piano Sonata no. 15 in D Major, op. 28, (*Pastoral*), is an extraordinarily innovative work. In it, Beethoven unites the familiar devices of the pastoral musical tradition with the compositional rigor, musical forms, and expression of the piano sonata.

Lecture Thirteen

The *Tempest*

Scope: According to Carl Czerny, while Beethoven was at work on the op. 31 sonatas during the summer and early fall of 1802, he said that he “wanted to take a new path.” Of course, it’s an article of faith that Beethoven’s groundbreaking composition, the one in which he sallied forth on his “new path” and reinvented himself and his music in “heroic” guise, is the Third Symphony, the *Eroica* of 1803. Nonetheless, while the Third Symphony might have been Beethoven’s public declaration of his “new path,” the piano sonatas were, collectively, his workshop for getting there. And more than any other piano sonata, it is the *Tempest*—the Piano Sonata no. 17 in D Minor, op. 31, no. 2—that truly marks the beginning of Beethoven’s “new path.”

Outline

- I. The first movement of the Piano Sonata in D Minor, op. 31, no. 2, is, undoubtedly, tempestuous. The opening of the first movement is also one of the most formally ambiguous and expressively enigmatic openings in Beethoven’s oeuvre. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 17 in D Minor, op. 31, no. 2 [*Tempest*], movement 1, theme 1.)
 - A. We begin, again, by asking the question: what constitutes “theme” here? We certainly do not hear a “thematic melody,” a “tune,” with a clear beginning, middle, and end. Instead, we hear two alternating, contrasting musical elements.
 1. The first element is a rising broken chord, or *arpeggio*, played *largo*, “very slowly,” a chord that is the dominant harmony of the tonic key of D minor. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 17 in D Minor, op. 31, no. 2 [*Tempest*], theme 1, opening chord.)
 2. The second element is a twitching, agitated, descending line marked “*allegro*,” or “fast,” that eventually comes to rest on an open cadence. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 17 in D Minor, op. 31, no. 2 [*Tempest*], movement 1, theme 1, agitated descent.)
 3. These two contrasting elements constitute the first half of the first theme. The second half of the theme begins with another slowly rising broken chord, followed by an extended version of the fast, twitching, agitated line. The theme ends on a closed cadence in the tonic key of D minor, the first unambiguous expression of D minor we’ve heard to this point of the movement. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 17 in D Minor, op. 31, no. 2 [*Tempest*], movement 1, theme 1, second half.)
 4. We now hear the entire theme, from the beginning. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 17 in D Minor, op. 31, no. 2 [*Tempest*], movement 1, theme 1.)
 - B. Some analysts have discussed the opening in terms of question—the slowly rising broken chords—and answer—the fast, twitching, descending lines that follow.
 1. What we can say with certainty about this opening is that, first, it has an almost improvisational feel to it; the slowly rising broken chord is what Beethoven reportedly played when he first sat down at an unfamiliar piano, to get a feel for its touch and sound.
 2. Second, whatever expressive meaning we ascribe to this opening theme, we must agree that its most obvious quality is its spontaneity. One could, perhaps, argue that Beethoven intended this “opening” to feel like a work already in progress, as if the “musical argument” that is this sonata began sometime before the piece even started!
 - C. Beethoven establishes two polar opposites at the beginning of this movement: the slowly rising broken chords, a musical element that represents reflection and repose, and the nervous, twitching *allegro* sections that invoke fear, terror, and confusion.
 1. The slowly rising broken chords occur at the key structural moments of the movement: at the beginning of the exposition, the development, and the recapitulation. These are moments of both harmonic and spiritual rest, and they provide us the means to separate ourselves from and objectively observe the otherwise overwhelming “tempestuous” music of the rest of the movement.
 2. This is not unlike the formal process we observed in the *Pathétique* Sonata, where the slow introductory music was again heard at the beginning of the development section, the recapitulation, and coda, in effect “punctuating” the movement with its dark, ruminative character.

3. This conflict between the slowly rising broken chords and the nervous, twitching, fast sections is, in my opinion, what the first movement of the *Tempest* Sonata is all about. It is a conflict that Beethoven has managed to contain within the first theme of a sonata form movement!
- D. The modulating bridge grows out of a dialogue between these two opposites—a rising, broken chord followed by an augmented version of the nervous, twitching melody.
1. The modulating bridge begins with a D minor chord growing out of the bass. (**Piano example.**)
 2. This is followed by a melody in the treble. (**Piano example**)
 3. This, in turn, is an *augmented* (meaning a rhythmically elongated) version of the nervous, twitching melody. (**Piano example.**)
 4. We now hear the modulating bridge. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 17 in D Minor, op. 31, no. 2 [*Tempest*], movement 1, modulating bridge.)
- E. The nature of theme 2 has caused almost as much debate as theme 1. At the conclusion of the modulating bridge, the harmony has arrived in the new key of A minor, but instead of introducing a new theme, the melody Beethoven sets in A minor is a version of the nervous, twitching element of theme 1.
1. Harmonically, this exposition is textbook sonata form; melodically, however, the exposition is monothematic, dominated exclusively by one theme.
 2. As we've observed, however, Beethoven's one theme is, in reality, two themes—two polar worldviews—in one. Beethoven doesn't "need" a second theme because the movement is all about the conflict already inherent in the opening theme!
- F. We now listen to the remainder of the exposition and the beginning of the exposition repeat, beginning with theme 2.
1. The momentum of this exposition is such that it is not possible to discern any cadence material per se.
 2. The degree of constant transformation and lack of cadential closure is such that the music charges headlong through the remainder of the exposition until it is brought up short by the slowly rising broken chord that initiates the exposition repeat—a moment of reflection and repose in this otherwise tempest-driven sea of notes. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 17 in D Minor, op. 31, no. 2 [*Tempest*], movement 1, theme 2, remainder of exposition, and exposition repeat beginning.)
- G. Like the exposition, non-stop continuity also characterizes the development section, which is in two parts.
1. Part 1 is the moment of rest before the storm. Three broken chords (or *arpeggios*) slowly and very quietly (*pianissimo*) rise from the bass: a D major chord, followed by a most dissonant D# diminished-seventh chord, followed by a most consonant F# major chord.
 2. There is a moment's pause, and then part 2 of the development section explodes! A *fortissimo* version of material first heard in the modulating bridge leads, eventually, to a dark, powerful chorale in D minor, which gives way to a descending line that leads back to the recapitulation. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 17 in D Minor, op. 31, no. 2 [*Tempest*], movement 1, development section.)
- H. The recapitulation that follows is remarkable. Theme 1 begins, as we would expect, with a slowly rising broken chord—a moment of peace before the final onslaught of the movement. But here, the rising broken chord is followed by a poignant and melancholy melody line, labeled by Beethoven "*senza rigore del tempo, quasi recitativo*," meaning "out of tempo, like a recitative." The nervous, twitching music begins but stops on an open cadence. Another peaceful, rising broken chord is followed by another plaintive recitative. Will this wish for peace be granted? (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 17 in D Minor, op. 31, no. 2 [*Tempest*], movement 1, recapitulation, theme 1.)
- I. The modulating bridge, as heard in the exposition, does not begin now. Instead, Beethoven seems to be crafting a response to the plaintive "voice from the wilderness" we just heard.
1. Immediately following the plaintive recitative, heavy, muffled, funeral march–like chords alternate with fast falling and rising arpeggios that seem to mock both the plaintive "voice," as well as the peaceful, slowly rising broken chords that have, to now, represented points of rest and reflection. Indeed, there will be no more such peaceful moments for the duration of this movement.
 2. "Theme 2" (or the version of theme 1 that passes for theme 2) follows, in the home key of D minor. Let's hear the remainder of the recapitulation, beginning with the "new" modulating bridge: the muffled, funeral march–like chords. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 17 in D Minor, op. 31, no. 2 [*Tempest*], movement 1, recapitulation.)

- J. The briefest of codas follows, cementing the dreary, dark, D minor mood. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 17 in D Minor, op. 31, no. 2 [*Tempest*], movement 1, coda.)
- II. The second movement *adagio* in Bb major is structured as a truncated sonata form, or *cavatina* form, a sonata form movement in which there is no exposition repeat or development section.
- A. The exposition, theme 1, begins as in the following example. (**Piano example.**)
- B. Once again, a rising broken chord—here a Bb major chord—has initiated a movement with a sense of reflection and repose. Unlike the first movement, however, where such moments were but brief respites, here in the second movement, reflection and repose will be the dominant expressive element, thus counterbalancing the *angst* and turmoil of the first movement.
- C. Further, as theme 1 unfolds, we recognize it as an extension and development of the recitative passages that we heard during the recapitulation of the first movement. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 17 in D Minor, op. 31, no. 2 [*Tempest*], movement 2, theme 1.)
- D. Thinking back again to the recapitulation of the first movement, what music immediately followed the theme 1 recitative? It was the muffled, funeral march–like episode. (**Piano example.**) In the same way, Beethoven initiates and accompanies the modulating bridge in the second movement with another march-like gesture, a drum rhythm called a *ruff*. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 17 in D Minor, op. 31, no. 2 [*Tempest*], movement 2, modulating bridge.)
- E. Of course, the expressive content of this music is completely removed from the parallel passage in the first movement recapitulation. What was, in the first movement, a funeral-like march is here a dignified and elegant processional on the road to a genuine theme 2!
1. Theme 2 is characterized by the same sort of recitative-like dotted rhythms as theme 1, although it's an altogether more spacious and lyric melody than theme 1. Let's hear theme 2 and the dark-toned, ruff-dominated cadence material that transits directly to the recapitulation and the first theme. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 17 in D Minor, op. 31, no. 2 [*Tempest*], movement 2, theme 2 and cadence material.)
 2. A magnificent and highly elaborated version of theme 1 follows, which is, in turn, followed by the ruff-dominated modulating bridge, theme 2, the ruff-dominated cadence material, and a remarkable coda.
- F. We must address a couple of points before we hear the coda.
1. First, the approaching third movement will begin and end in the tonic key of D minor.
 2. Second, in the second movement, we are in the infinitely brighter key of Bb major.
 3. Given where we are, harmonically, at the end of the second movement and given where Beethoven wants to be at the beginning of the third movement, he must do something at the conclusion of the second movement to anticipate the return to D minor in the third movement
 4. What he does, during the course of the coda that concludes the second movement, is isolate and emphasize the pitches Bb and A. This may seem not particularly surprising; after all, Bb is the tonic pitch of this second movement and A is its leading tone, the pitch that resolves upward to a Bb. Twice, however, Beethoven plays a low Bb followed by an A that does not resolve back to the Bb but, rather, just lies there. (**Piano example.**)
 5. Thus, when the movement ends, moments later, on two widely spaced Bbs (heard in the first example that follows), we don't hear that as an ending. Instead, we expect the Bb to, once again, fall downward to an A, which just happens to be the first pitch of the third movement and the dominant pitch of the key of D minor. (**Piano examples.**)
- G. Let's hear the coda and conclusion of the second movement and, with it, the seamless transition into the third movement, achieved via the Bb–A motion, followed by the first theme of the third movement sonata form. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 17 in D Minor, op. 31, no. 2 [*Tempest*], movement 2, coda, movement 3, theme 1.)

- III. Having balanced and reconciled fear, terror, and confusion with repose and reflection over the course of the first two movements, Beethoven can cut loose with the sort of rhythmic, dance-oriented music at which he excelled in the third movement.
- A. The third movement is known as a *moto perpetuo*, meaning a “perpetual motion”; once the subdivision of six sixteenth notes (or *sextuplet*) is introduced in the first measure, it continues, non-stop, for 399 measures, to the last note of the movement. Given this absolute rhythmic consistency from start to finish, Beethoven will have to work that much harder to differentiate his themes.
 - B. As we just heard, theme 1 is a tarantella-like dance melody that features rising broken chords in the bass alternating and overlapping with melodic motives in the treble. Theme 2, on the other hand, consists of a series of syncopated embellishments called *mordents*, followed by half-step descents. **(Piano example. Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 17 in D Minor, op. 31, no. 2 [*Tempest*], movement 3, theme 2.)
 - C. As we listen to the entire exposition, we must appreciate the extraordinary rhythmic energy and momentum that seem to grow as the movement progresses! **(Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 17 in D Minor, op. 31, no. 2 [*Tempest*], movement 4, exposition.)
 - D. The development section sees Beethoven set himself a challenge to see how long can he maintain a single, basic pattern, the pattern that characterized theme 1. **(Piano example.)**
 - 1. As it turns out, Beethoven keep that pattern going for 104 measures, until it finally gives way to a single running line that slowly sinks downward toward the recapitulation. Across the span of these 104 measures, Beethoven creates a sense of variety and change through the tiniest manipulations of accent, rhythmic displacement, dynamics, and harmony.
 - 2. We hear the development section in its entirety, followed by theme 1 in the recapitulation. And don’t be fooled by the false recapitulation that occurs 42 seconds into the excerpt! **(Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 17 in D Minor, op. 31, no. 2 [*Tempest*], movement 3, development and recapitulation, theme 1.)
 - E. We just have time to listen to the coda of this wonderful movement, yet another brilliant exploration of the same theme 1–derived pattern that powered the development section. Let’s hear the coda, which reaches its climax with a huge, two-handed chromatic descent 49 seconds into the excerpt, then sinks quietly away, ending with a long descent into the depths of the piano. **(Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 17 in D Minor, op. 31, no. 2 [*Tempest*], movement 3, coda.)

Lecture Fourteen

A Quartet of Sonatas

Scope: In the three sonatas of op. 31, Beethoven used an organizational template that had served him well for the three sonatas of both op. 2 and op. 10. In each of these sets, Beethoven sought to achieve maximum contrast between the sonatas, and he did this by including one sonata in minor, one sonata in a sharp key, and one in a flat key. Op. 31, no. 2—the *Tempest*, which we examined in the last lecture—is in D minor. In this lecture, we look at op. 31, no. 1, in G major—a “sharp” key—and op. 31, no. 3, in Eb major—a flat key.

Outline

- I. The sonatas op. 31, nos. 1 and 3, stand in complete contrast to op. 31, no. 2, the *Tempest*. The *Tempest* is a dark and stormy sonata, while op. 31, nos. 1 and 3, are both lighthearted works. No. 3—in Eb major—is relatively lyric, and no. 1—in G major—is genuinely comic.
 - A. As we listen to the opening of theme 1 of op. 31, no. 1, be aware that the hands of the pianist don’t quite seem able to stay together: the right hand—the upper part—is, more often than not, just slightly ahead of the left hand, the lower part. This disjointed opening—indeed, the whole first movement—is pure musical comedy. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 16 in G Major, op. 31, no. 1, movement 1, theme 1.)
 1. If op. 31, no. 2, is known as the *Tempest*, op. 31, no. 1, might be called the *Oops* Sonata, because that’s what this first movement is all about. From the first note, the right hand comes in a sixteenth note before the left. (**Piano example.**)
 2. The two hands have a difficult time trying to coordinate their activities; sometimes they succeed, but just as often, they can’t quite get together. (**Piano example.**)
 - B. Musically, the first part of the modulating bridge is an extension of the fast, descending line that initiated the theme. Dramatically—or, more properly, comedically—the modulating bridge is “about” the two hands finally managing to play together for a length of time. So pleased are they at having managed to stay together that the two hands peel off into a brilliant and exuberant series of D major arpeggios. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 16 in G Major, op. 31, no. 1, movement 1, modulating bridge, part 1.)
 - C. In the long run, however, the two hands “don’t get it.” After a long pause, theme 1 starts up again, with the hands once again playing in and out of sync with each other. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 16 in G Major, op. 31, no. 1, movement 1, modulating bridge, part 2.)
 - D. Theme 2 is an opera buffa-type comic tune, played first in the treble by the right hand, then in the bass by the left, accompanied, in turn and in proper time, by the alternate hand. It would seem that the music and the pianist’s hands have finally gotten things together, except that the second theme is in the wrong key.
 1. Instead of introducing theme 2 in the key of D major—the expected key, given that theme 1 was in G major—we are in the distant key of B major—one of those *third-related* keys (a major third above G major) to which Beethoven loved to modulate.
 2. This key choice will cause a tonal identity crisis for theme 2 and the cadence material, which will both harmonically “swim around,” searching in vain for the “correct key.” In doing so, they will move through as many different key areas—both major and minor—as a development section, arriving on an octave D only at the last moment and on the last pitch of the exposition. Let’s hear theme 2, the ensuing cadence material, and the “hunt for D major”! (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 16 in G Major, op. 31, no. 1, movement 1, theme 2 and cadence material.)
- II. The second movement, marked “*adagio grazioso*,” “slowly and gracefully,” is a genuine serenade, complete with a long, highly embellished, Italianate melody line and a guitar-like accompaniment.
 - A. The movement is structured in three parts: A B A + coda. We hear the opening of part A. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 16 in G Major, op. 31, no. 1, movement 2, A.)

- B. The salon music character of this second movement turned off a number of Beethoven’s admirers, who were put out by its “frivolity” and “lightness of character.” However, a heavy, “serious,” slow movement would have turned this otherwise lighthearted sonata to stone.
- C. What’s called for here is a long-lined and lyric movement to stand in contrast with the choppy, comic music of the first movement. That’s precisely what Beethoven delivers, with some of the most beautifully lyric piano writing of the 19th century.
- III. Beethoven’s light, comic strategy for this sonata continues through the third and final movement rondo-sonata. Although some have been pointed out that the rondo theme is in the style of a *gavotte*, an old French dance in duple meter, it is even more in the style of Mozart—lyric and light, with just enough chromaticism (meaning just enough notes “outside” the home key of G major) to give it a sense of harmonic depth and richness.
- A. The rondo theme appears first in the treble of the piano, accompanied simply, then in the bass, accompanied above by a running line in triplets. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 16 in G Major, op. 31, no. 1, movement 3, rondo theme.)
- B. As mentioned earlier, this movement—like so many of Beethoven’s rondo finales—is a *rondo-sonata*. Recall that in this form, the first contrasting episode (B) will be reprised near the end of the movement, rendering a large-scale form of A B A C A B + coda. Further, the second contrasting episode (C) will have the character of a development section.
- C. We move directly to the second contrasting episode (C), which is, indeed, a development of the rondo theme. This passage contains the most “serious” music in the entire sonata, with its mock-fugal entries and dissonance. We will listen to this developmental episode—which concludes with a thrumming D tremolo in the bass of the piano—and the opening of the subsequent restatement of the rondo theme. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 16 in G Major, op. 31, no. 1, movement 3, C and first half of rondo theme.)
- D. The coda is entirely off the wall and must be heard to be believed!
1. It begins with the rondo theme but with each phrase separated from the next by seemingly interminable, four-beat rests. The first phrase of the rondo theme is played at tempo—*allegretto*—but the second is played *adagio*; the third, rather impatient phrase is played *allegretto*; the fourth and fifth phrases are played *adagio*. Is this going somewhere? (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 16 in G Major, op. 31, no. 1, movement 3, coda.)
 2. A slowly rising bass line leads to a trill in the bass, and the music suddenly becomes *presto*—“very fast.” The opening motive of theme 1 (**Piano example**) darts around like a hummingbird and ends up in the bass, where it rattles around until a series of cadence chords rings out.
 3. Of course, the hands can’t manage to play the chords together, a clear reference back to the first movement, and they don’t get it together until the final G major chord of the movement. Let’s hear the remainder of the coda, from the rising bass and trill, through the *presto* iteration of the rondo theme motive, and the “out-of-sync” final cadence. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 16 in G Major, op. 31, no. 1, movement 3, coda.)
- IV. At four movements in length, op. 31, no. 3, will be the last of Beethoven’s piano sonatas, except the Piano Sonata, op. 106 (*Hammerklavier*), of 1818, to contain more than three movements and the last to include a “minuet” among its movements.
- A. According to Charles Rosen: “The first bars of the Sonata in Eb Major, op. 31, no. 3, are emotionally the most unsettling that Beethoven had written” (Rosen, 173). What may seem unsettling is the “questioning” nature of the opening. This movement, purportedly in Eb major, does not begin in Eb major, and the sense of “question and answer” that characterizes the opening is, in reality, a search for a tonic harmony and the eventual discovery of a tonic harmony. (**Piano example**.)
- B. The duality of this opening theme is what makes it so unsettling; it is a rhetorical gesture or a musical question—“Where has Eb major gone?”—and, at the same time, the first theme in a sonata-form movement. We observed the same sort of duality in the first theme of the first movement of the *Tempest* Sonata, where a single theme represented two different emotional and spiritual states!
- C. As we listen to theme 1 and the following modulating bridge that is built from theme 1, be aware of the constant rhetorical swing between “question” and “answer,” between harmonic tension and release.

- (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 18 in Eb Major, op. 31, no. 3, movement 1, theme 1 and modulating bridge.)
- D. The intense lyricism of the sonata is on display in theme 2, which is a much more “traditional” thematic construct than the “questioning” theme 1. It’s a playful, even brilliant tune in the “expected” key of Bb major; nevertheless, it has one genuinely comic and entirely unexpected feature: a long, almost stuttering interlude set between the two phrases of the theme, as if the theme momentarily forgot the “point” it was trying to make. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 18 in Eb Major, op. 31, no. 3, movement 1, theme 2.)
- E. The trill-filled cadence material immediately follows. Let’s hear the cadence material and, with it, the remainder of the exposition, followed by the opening of theme 1 in the exposition repeat. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 18 in Eb Major, op. 31, no. 3, movement 1, cadence material and exposition repeat, opening.)
- V. The second movement is marked “*allegretto vivace*”—“moderately fast and full of life”—and is set in duple meter. Despite this fact, almost every music scholar wants to call this movement a scherzo, which is usually understood to be a triple-meter form. The confusion in the literature of precisely what to call this movement is almost as comic as the music itself.
- A. Admittedly, this confusion is understandable, given the movement’s idiosyncratic structure. It’s a sonata-form movement in Ab major with a transitional/modulatory episode in place of a second theme!
- B. Having said that, the movement does have the character of a march, though a march for toy soldiers in double, even quadruple time. Let’s hear the entire exposition. The transitional/modulatory episode that appears in lieu of a second theme or even a second key area begins with two *fortissimo* chords 47 seconds into the excerpt. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 18 in Eb Major, op. 31, no. 3, movement 2, exposition.)
- C. As we would expect in a sonata-form movement, this entire section of “expository” music is immediately repeated before moving on to a lengthy and clearly developmental section of music. Let’s hear this development section, which concludes with a four-and-a-half octave descent, followed by the beginning of the recapitulation and theme 1. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 18 in Eb Major, op. 31, no. 3, movement 2, development section and recapitulation opening.)
- VI. There is no slow movement in op. 31, no. 3; the third movement is a minuet and trio. It is music of extraordinary grace and sophistication, as if Beethoven had set out to prove that he could still compose beautifully in this overdone genre. We hear the opening minuet section. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 18 in Eb Major, op. 31, no. 3, movement 3, minuet.)
- VII. The final movement of op. 31, no. 3, is, like the final movement of the *Tempest* Sonata, a *tarantella*—a fast, compound-duple-meter dance of southern Italian origin. Marked *presto con fuoco*—“very fast, with fire”—this movement, like the final movement of the *Tempest*, is about rhythm, energy, and movement!
- A. Theme 1, which dominates the movement, is one of those typically Beethovenian themes that is so simple it borders on the banal. It consists of but one descending phrase, played first high, then low. (**Piano example.**)
- B. Now we hear the recapitulation, coda, and the conclusion of this super-energized finale. For our information, the coda begins 54 seconds into the excerpt. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 18 in Eb Major, op. 31, no. 3, movement 4, recapitulation and coda.)
- VIII. The Piano Sonatas nos. 19 and 20, op. 49, nos. 1 and 2, are the anomalies among Beethoven’s piano sonatas. Despite the fact that they were published in 1805 and, as a result, have an opus number that places them among Beethoven’s mid-career works, they were composed almost a decade before as *Hausmusik*—light music to be performed by amateurs at home. Piano Sonata, op. 49, no. 1, in G Minor was likely composed in 1797, and Piano Sonata, op. 49, no. 2, in G Major was probably composed in 1796.
- A. Beethoven had put the manuscripts for these sonatas aside as not to be published, but his brother Casper sent the manuscripts to the Viennese Bureau of Arts and Industry for publication, without consulting Ludwig. Beethoven was enraged when he discovered what Casper had done, but by then, it was too late to stop publication. Posterity, however, is indebted to Casper.

- B.** The sonatas op. 49, nos. 1 and 2, are each two movements in length; each begins with a sonata form first movement and concludes with a rondo. The rondo that concludes op. 49, no. 2, is of particular note because of its theme, a tune in G major and triple meter marked *tempo di menuetto*—“in the tempo of a minuet.” (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 20 in G Major, op. 49, no. 2, movement 2, theme.)
- C.** This attractive, if not particularly striking, tune went on to become an integral part of what was, along with the *Moonlight* Sonata, Beethoven’s most popular piece in his lifetime. What was that piece? The answer is his Septet for Violin, Viola, ‘Cello, Bass, Clarinet, Bassoon, and Horn in Eb Major, op. 20, completed in 1800.
1. The septet, six movements in length, was privately premiered in 1800, publicly premiered in 1802, and published in 1804. Its popularity was such that it was arranged for virtually every conceivable instrumental combination. At the center of the septet is a minuet and trio movement. As a reminder, we hear the rondo theme from the second movement of the Piano Sonata in G Major, op. 49, no. 2, of 1796. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 20 in G Major, op. 49, no. 2, movement 2, theme.)
 2. We now hear the minuet from the Septet in Eb Major, op. 20, of 1800. (**Musical selection:** Septet in Eb Major, op. 20, movement 3 [minuet].)
 3. Perhaps one of the reasons Casper Carl van Beethoven wanted to see the Piano Sonata in G Major in print was because of the second movement rondo theme and his desire to bank off a melody that had already proved itself a winner in the septet. Perhaps one of the reasons that Beethoven did not want to see the G Major in print was that he knew he had reused its rondo theme melody in the septet, but the rest of the world did not know, at least not until his brother had it published without his permission.

Lecture Fifteen

The *Waldstein* and the Heroic Style

Scope: Beethoven began work on the *Waldstein* sometime in December of 1803 or January of 1804, immediately after having finished the composition of his Third Symphony, the *Eroica*. The sheer length and power of the *Eroica*; its breathtaking degree of contrast and dramatic range; the relatively huge orchestra it called for; its amazing degree of motivic development, harmonic invention, and rhythmic drive; and its “heroic” expressive message all combine to create a piece of symphonic music the likes of which no one had ever heard to its time or even imagined as being possible. The Piano Sonata in C Major, op. 53 (*Waldstein*), was the first piano sonata Beethoven composed after having drafted his Third Symphony, and we can be assured that more than a little of the revolutionary spirit of the Third Symphony rubbed off on the *Waldstein* Sonata!

Outline

- I. The opening of the *Waldstein*—theme 1 of the sonata form—is like no other music written by Beethoven or anyone else, for that matter.
 - A. Thematically, it is music of motion, music in which the overwhelmingly memorable thematic element is its unremitting, unrelenting rhythmic drive and energy. As we’ll hear, theme 1 consists of two large phrases, with the first ending on an open cadence and a pause. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 21 in C Major, op. 53 [*Waldstein*], movement 1, theme 1.)
 - B. If the “lead story” of this theme is its rhythmic power, then its “back story” is its harmonic structure and its bass line.
 1. The sonata is “billed” as being in C major, and indeed, it begins with a low C, followed by 13 consecutive C major chords! (**Piano example.**) However, a single chord does not make a convincing key area.
 2. To truly believe we’re in the key of C major (or D major, or E minor, and so on), we need to hear two different harmonies. First, we need to hear the tonic harmony—in the case of C major, a C chord. (**Piano example.**) Second, we need to hear the key’s dominant harmony, preferably resolving back to the tonic. In the case of C major, this would mean a G dominant chord resolving back to a C chord. (**Piano example.**)
 3. In other words, we define a key as tonic–dominant–tonic. (**Piano examples.**)
 4. At the beginning of the *Waldstein*, however, we get 13 repetitions of a C major harmony; without a dominant chord, we can’t be absolutely sure what key we’re in. For example, the C major chord in the following example could, in reality, be the dominant chord of F major. (**Piano example.**)
 5. Alternatively, the C major chord might ultimately function as the subdominant chord in the key of G major. (**Piano example.**)
 6. Why, then, should we believe that we’re in C major at the beginning of this sonata, aside from the fact that Beethoven forces C major on us by repeating a C major chord 13 times? The answer is that we can’t really know whether we are in C major; we can only expect that we are, and that expectation is shot down by the harmonies that immediately follow the 13th repetition of the C major chord—a D dominant that resolves to the key of G major! (**Piano example.**)
 - C. As we observed earlier, the “lead story” of theme 1 is its rhythmic power, but its “back story” is its harmonic structure and its bass line. After 13 repetitions of a C major chord, the harmony moves to G major, and the bass line drops a half-step, from a C to a B. (**Piano example.**)
 1. We’re in G major, but not for long. The bass line now drops another half-step to a B \flat , and in a phrase parallel to the opening measures of the theme, a B \flat major harmony is repeated 14 times before the bass line drops another half-step and resolves to an F major chord. (**Piano example.**)
 2. Now we’re in F major, but again, not for long. The bass line drops another half-step, to an A \flat , shifting the music to F minor. Then, the bass line drops yet another half-step down to a G—the dominant pitch of C major. The bass line switches back and forth between A \flat and G before finally coming to rest on a G. (**Piano example.**)
 3. This finally resolves, not to C major, but to a descending C minor chord. (**Piano example.**)

4. This chord then moves on to another G and a pause, which brings the first half of the theme to its conclusion. When this G resolves, it will be to C major at the beginning of the second phrase, virtually the first time since the piece began that we've had any sort of resolution to C major, ostensibly the tonic key of this movement! **(Piano example.)**
 5. During the course of this opening phrase, a descending chromatic bass line has moved downward from a C to a G and, in the process, tonicized the keys of G major, F major, and C minor before finally arriving on the dominant that will, at the beginning of the second phrase of the theme, finally resolve to the home key—the tonic key—of C major! **(Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 21 in C Major, op. 53 [*Waldstein*], movement 1, theme 1.)
- D.** The second half of the theme begins as the first half did, by tonicizing G major. **(Piano example.)**
1. From here, instead of moving downward to a Bb, the bass line moves up to a D, and the harmony proceeds to tonicize yet another key—A minor! **(Piano example.)**
 2. During the course of this first theme, Beethoven has momentarily tonicized four keys outside of the tonic C major: G major, F major, C minor, and A minor, the three closely related keys and the parallel minor key of C major! Having gotten these closely related keys “out of the way,” Beethoven will feel free to go on a wide-ranging exploration of distant key areas for the remainder of this movement.
- E.** Having tonicized the key of A minor during the second half of theme 1, Beethoven spends the last measure of theme 1 moving away from A minor by rising a half-step from A to an A#, which moves upward another half-step to a B major chord for the onset of the modulating bridge. **(Piano example.)**
1. This B major chord becomes the dominant of the key of E minor, and harmonically, the opening of this rhythmically manic modulating bridge is indeed perceived as being in E minor. The modulating bridge is itself an extension and development of the descending groups of five notes that constituted almost the only melodic movement in theme 1. **(Piano examples.)**
 2. Eventually, a series of broken octaves “walks” upward through an E major scale, paving the way for the beginning of theme 2 in the key of E major. Let's hear the modulating bridge, E minor to E major. **(Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 21 in C Major, op. 53 [*Waldstein*], movement 1, modulating bridge.)
- F.** Theme 2 is set in E major, a third away from the tonic C major—yet another example of Beethoven's predilection for movement between distantly related keys a third away from each other. Theme 2 itself—like the modulating bridge that preceded it—is another extrapolation of the descending group of five notes heard in theme 1. **(Piano examples.)**
1. Theme 2 is in two parts. The first part is presented almost like a hymn, and this passage marks one of the few moments in the movement when rhythmic momentum gives way to lyricism.
 2. The second part of theme 2 sees the theme decorated in eighth-note triplets. **(Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 21 in C Major, op. 53 [*Waldstein*], movement 1, theme 2.)
- G.** The cadence material is long and spectacular.
1. A cadence theme characterized by eighth-note triplets gives way to an explosive passage in faster sixteenth notes that ends high on the keyboard with a long trill. We will listen to the first half of the cadence material. **(Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 21 in C Major, op. 53 [*Waldstein*], movement 1, cadence material, first half.)
 2. We're still in the key of E major, but not for long. The second half of the cadence material sees E minor reintroduced, as rippling scalar lines in the treble give way to slower, falling motives that literally contract, squeezing the music downward toward the low register where the movement began. **(Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 21 in C Major, op. 53 [*Waldstein*], movement 1, cadence material, second half.)
- H.** This exposition sounds completely modern! Its rhythmic energy and harmonic inventiveness, the motivic development that gives life and interest to the seemingly simplest melodic structures, and its brilliant pianism together create a unified, yet gloriously varied environment.
- I.** Like the exposition, the development section is a masterpiece of concision and economy of means.
1. The recapitulation proceeds as we would expect it to with one glaring exception: when theme 2 returns, it does not return in the tonic key of C major (as it “should”) but, instead, in the distant key of A major. A major is a third below C major, where in the exposition, theme 2 was heard in E major, a third above C major!

2. Sooner or later, theme 2 must appear in C major, a signal event that Beethoven is saving for the coda.
- J.** The coda is massive and magnificent. It begins with theme 1 in the extremely distant key of Db major.
1. The first job of the coda is to get back to C major, which doesn't happen quickly; only after about 1 minute of incredibly virtuosic passagework based on motives drawn from theme 1 does the harmony collapse onto two sustained open cadences in C major.
 2. Theme 2—marked *molto tranquillo*, “very tranquilly”—immediately follows, finally in the key of C major. Another sustained open cadence caps theme 2, and theme 1 returns—now and forever in the key of C major.
 3. The theme expands to the outer reaches of the keyboard, contracts inward, then reaches the cadence and the end of the movement. We hear the coda, beginning with theme 1 in Db major. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 21 in C Major, op. 53 [*Waldstein*], movement 1, coda.)
- II.** Beethoven's original second movement for the *Waldstein* was a long, florid, operatic *andante*. He decided the movement was both too long and “not in the spirit” of what he wanted, so he removed it entirely and later published it under the title of *Andante favori*. In its place, Beethoven composed a much shorter and much more intense *adagio introduzione* (literally, “a slow introduction”) that sets up and frames the third movement rondo.
- A.** This second movement is set in the closely related key of F major. It's in three parts and is generally characterized by upward motives in dotted rhythms.
1. These upward-rising motives have an anticipatory quality to them; collectively, they are a “question” that isn't “answered” until the beginning of the third and final movement.
 2. The slow, dotted rhythms and rising lines also reflect a certain formality that is evocative of the old French overture, which we discussed apropos of the *Pathétique* Sonata. Let's hear the first of the three parts that make up this second movement. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 21 in C Major, op. 53 [*Waldstein*], movement 2, opening.)
- B.** The second part of the movement features a rich, almost ‘cello-like melody line heard in the lower register of the piano.
- C.** The third and final section of the movement opens quietly but quickly rises to a lengthy and dissonant climactic passage that only slowly quiets, arriving, finally, on an open cadence—the dominant of the key of C major, the tonic key of the third movement of the sonata.
1. The second movement “ends” on this open cadence. Beneath this “ending,” Beethoven indicates “*attacca subito il rondo*,” meaning, “immediately begin the rondo without a pause.”
 2. The low C that begins the rondo is one of the greatest single pitches ever written! It's the “answer” we've been waiting for through the entire second movement, a structural downbeat that immediately grounds the blossoming rondo theme.
 3. Let's hear the third and final part of the second movement—the dissonant climax of the movement—its concluding open cadence, then the magnificent rondo theme that begins the third movement. The rondo theme consists of three phrases: in the first, the theme is heard quietly in the treble; in the second, the theme is heard in octaves in the treble, surrounded by a filigree-like accompaniment; and in the third phrase, the theme is heard *fortissimo*, surrounded by trilling and scalar accompaniment. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 21 in C Major, op. 53 [*Waldstein*], movement 2, conclusion, and movement 3, rondo theme.)
- III.** The third movement of the *Waldstein* is another of Beethoven's rondo-sonatas, with a large-scale form of A B A C A B + coda.
- A.** We begin with the first contrasting episode—a stomping, earthy, dance-like episode that moves to the key of A minor—and the subsequent restatement of the rondo theme that follows, back in the key of C major. Be especially aware of the incredible range of dynamics—relative loud and soft—that Beethoven calls for throughout the movement. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 21 in C Major, op. 53 [*Waldstein*], movement 3, first contrasting episode and rondo theme.)
- B.** The second contrasting episode (section C) also begins with a peasant dance-like passage, then moves on to develop the rondo theme. Let's hear the second contrasting episode and the somewhat abbreviated restatement of the rondo theme that follows. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 21 in C Major, op. 53 [*Waldstein*], movement 3, second contrasting episode and rondo theme.)

- C. A varied restatement of section B follows, then the coda. Marked *prestissimo*, this music is played at warp speed, with its destination a final cadence in C major. The effect is magnificent, celebratory, and utterly heroic. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 21 in C Major, op. 53 [*Waldstein*], movement 3, coda.)
- D. With the *Waldstein*, the technical demands of the piano sonata were elevated to a level equal to those of a piano concerto. The *Waldstein* was a composition written for the professional solo pianist, and as a result, it represents a further blending of the genres of piano sonata and piano concerto, a blending we first observed in the Piano Sonata no. 3 in C Major, op. 2, no. 3.

Lecture Sixteen

The *Appassionata* and the Heroic Style

Scope: Late in life, Beethoven acknowledged that his favorite piano sonatas were the Sonata no. 23 in F Minor (*Appassionata*), op. 57; the Sonata no. 25 in F# Major, op. 78; and the Sonata no. 29 in Bb Major (*Hammerklavier*), op. 106. The *Appassionata* has evoked some spectacular comparisons: Hugo Leichtentritt has likened it to Dante's *Inferno*; Arnold Schering, to Shakespeare's *Macbeth*; Romain Rolland, to Corneille's tragedies; and Donald Francis Tovey, to nothing less than Shakespeare's *King Lear*. In this lecture, we'll recount some of the history of the *Appassionata* and examine this sonata in depth.

Outline

- I. *Appassionata* means “passionate.” Beethoven hated the nickname, mainly because it in no way describes the brooding and tragic nature of the sonata, evident from its very first notes.
 - A. The first movement begins with a theme that is stunning in its simplicity and dramatic power. The theme consists of two elements, the first of which is a falling, then rising F minor arpeggio, played in both hands, two octaves apart. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 23 in F Minor, op. 57 [*Appassionata*], movement 1, theme 1.)
 1. The effect is of something dark and ominous, moving about in some cavernous place. The second element of the theme follows immediately: a pathetic, imploring figure characterized by a trill and followed by an open cadence. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 23 in F Minor, op. 57 [*Appassionata*], movement 1, theme 1.)
 2. This second element is followed by silence. Will the open cadence be resolved? Will something rather more “tuneful” grow out of the open cadence? The answer is no on both counts. Instead, the opening phrase is repeated a half-step higher; a Gb major arpeggio is followed by the imploring figure and an open cadence. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 23 in F Minor, op. 57 [*Appassionata*], movement 1, theme 1.)
 3. Is this open cadence resolved? Again, the answer is no. Instead, the music drops down a half-step, back toward F minor. A rather lengthy cadential phrase follows, in which the imploring, trilling figure and its concluding open cadence are heard lower, then higher, each time followed by an ominous half-step motive, sounding like some sort of funeral drum. (**Piano example.**)
 4. The avoidance of any resolution in this passage creates an atmosphere of paralysis, of frustration—one often compared to Hamlet's paralyzing indecision—until an explosive arpeggiated figure leads to yet another open cadence and a pause. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 23 in F Minor, op. 57 [*Appassionata*], movement 1, theme 1.)
 - B. So far, we have lots of “questions”—open cadences and pauses—but not a single “answer.” And for all of its banging and pounding, no answers are provided during the second part of the theme either, in which the falling/rising F minor arpeggio is viciously interrupted by crashing, explosive chords, as the music jerks back and forth between *piano* and *forte*. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 23 in F Minor, op. 57 [*Appassionata*], movement 1, theme 1, part 2.)
 - C. The modulating bridge just “happens,” without any sense of cadential resolution to mark the “end” of theme 1 and the “beginning” of the bridge. It's a brief but agitated passage characterized by repeated Eb's, the dominant pitch of the approaching “new key” of theme 2, Ab major. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 23 in F Minor, op. 57 [*Appassionata*], movement 1, modulating bridge.)
 - D. Now, we are about to hear the first closed cadence in the movement, as the repeated Es in the bass ease into an Ab major chord in preparation for the entrance of theme 2. (**Piano example.**)
 - E. Theme 2 is akin to theme 1, though with a smile on its face and a more “melodic” guise. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 23 in F Minor, op. 57 [*Appassionata*], movement 1, theme 2.)
 1. Marked *legato possibile, con molto espressione*—“as smoothly as possible and with great expression”—theme 2 is a stately, regal theme that nevertheless shares both its arpeggiated shape and rhythmic profile with theme 1. (**Piano examples.**)

2. These themes are not just “cut from the same cloth”; they are two different sides of the same musical personality. Despite the fact that it begins in Ab major, theme 2 darkens and moves, by its end, to Ab minor. It concludes with a series of trills followed by a long, falling line that descends into the same cavernous depth from which theme 1 arose.
 3. The beauty of this second theme is that Beethoven has been able to introduce a lyric thematic element, initially heard in a major key, without sacrificing the essentially “tragic” nature of the exposition. Let’s hear theme 2 again; it is, indeed, stately and regal, but it smiles through its tears, tears that are quite evident by the theme’s end. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 23 in F Minor, op. 57 [*Appassionata*], movement 1, theme 2.)
- F.** The melancholy descent that marks the conclusion of theme 2 gives way to a furious cadence theme that erupts from the lower register of the piano.
1. A hoquet-like passage—a back-and-forth, “zipper-like” dialogue between treble and bass—sees the left-hand part descend deep into the bass as the right-hand part rattles around in the highest reaches of the treble.
 2. The passage comes to a pause on two Abs, spaced as widely apart as possible on Beethoven’s piano. And that’s how the exposition ends, once again, without a cadence, without a “defining” harmonic progression, by just “settling” onto these two Abs five octaves apart. We hear the cadence material and the conclusion of the exposition. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 23 in F Minor, op. 57 [*Appassionata*], movement 1, cadence material.)
- G.** Uncharacteristically, Beethoven does not call for a repeat of the exposition, indicating that the music should move directly into the development section. This development section begins with one of Beethoven’s favorite devices—a pivot modulation to a distant key a third away.
1. As we discussed, the exposition concludes in the key of Ab minor, with two widely spaced Abs. (**Piano example.**)
 2. Those Abs are now enharmonically reinterpreted as G#s. (**Piano example.**)
 3. The G#s then become the middle pitch of an E major chord. (**Piano example.**)
 4. A slightly extended version of the opening phrase of theme 1 now unfolds in E major! Let’s listen from the widely spaced Abs that conclude the exposition, through the pivot modulation to E major and the version of theme 1 in E major that follows, ending on an open cadence. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 23 in F Minor, op. 57 [*Appassionata*], movement 1, cadence material conclusion and development, part 1.)
 5. The open cadence at the end of this first part of the development section resolves to E minor. The second part of the development is a modulatory sequence based on theme 1, accompanied, alternately above and below, by tremolos and rapid passagework. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 23 in F Minor, op. 57 [*Appassionata*], movement 1, development, part 2.)
 6. Parts 3 and 4 of the development section serve to calm and focus the raging harmonic motion in preparation for an upcoming appearance of theme 2 in Db major in part 5.
 7. Part 3 of the development section is based on the modulating bridge; agitated, repeated Abs stabilize the harmony and act as an extended dominant for the approaching key of Db major.
 8. Part 4 of the development section consists of gently rolling triplets that further calm the mood and continue to outline an Ab dominant harmony, the dominant of the approaching Db major. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 23 in F Minor, op. 57 [*Appassionata*], movement 1, development, parts 3 and 4.)
 9. The resolution to Db major at the beginning of part 5, in this otherwise resolution-starved movement, is profoundly powerful.
 10. The rolling triplets that characterized the previous part of the development section now move into the bass and provide the accompaniment for a stately and initially tranquil version of theme 2 in Db major.
 11. Of course, as we know from the exposition, theme 2 cannot maintain its “brave smile” forever. There is hardly time for the sense of “song” that pervades theme 2 to be felt before the theme begins to modulate, quickly and with a growing sense of panic, as we approach the “abyss”—the dramatic center—of the movement, in part 6. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 23 in F Minor, op. 57 [*Appassionata*], movement 1, development, part 5.)
 12. The chromatically rising bass line that concluded part 5 of the development section arrives on a Db, and with its arrival, an epic harmonic storm breaks loose. A series of rippling diminished harmonies

- (extreme dissonances!) is heard without any reference to key or theme; we are, truly, suspended over the abyss! (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 23 in F Minor, op. 57 [*Appassionata*], movement 1, development, part 6.)
13. Part 7 of the development begins with hammering groups of Dbs heard against an E diminished-chord tremolo, creating a huge diminished-seventh chord, the single most dissonant chord in Beethoven's harmonic arsenal. (**Piano example.**)
 14. Only slowly do the hammering groups of Dbs begin to resolve downward to Cs, which reminds us of the ominous half-step "funeral drum" motive we heard at the beginning of the movement. At the same time, the downward resolution from Db to C—C being the dominant of the tonic F minor—anticipates the approaching recapitulation. (**Piano example.**)
 15. Those low, throbbing Cs continue for two full measures. We await a resolution to F minor, and we get one, in a way, with the beginning of the recapitulation.
 16. Even as theme 1 returns in the recapitulation, the throbbing C continues in the bass, effectively robbing us of the relief and satisfaction an F in the bass would have provided.
 17. The harmonic and spiritual frustration that has marked so much of this movement continues unabated here in the recapitulation. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 23 in F Minor, op. 57 [*Appassionata*], movement 1, development, part 7, recapitulation, theme 1, part 1.)
- H. We move forward to the long and magnificent coda, in six parts.
1. The first half of the coda—parts 1 through 3—expands on material first heard in the development section. The coda begins—as both the exposition and recapitulation ended—in a state of registral extremes: the rising element of theme 1 is heard deep in the bass beneath a flickering accompaniment in the highest reaches of the piano. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 23 in F Minor, op. 57 [*Appassionata*], movement 1, coda, part 1.)
 2. In part 2 of the coda, theme 2—marked "*tranquillo*," "tranquilly"—begins in Db major. Again, however, the tranquility of the moment disintegrates as the dissonance level increases and the harmony beneath the theme begins to modulate.
 3. In part 3 of the coda, thematic references disappear entirely as a series of increasingly long arpeggios sweeps up and down the keyboard, in a section of music not unlike the "abyss" of the development. The activity slows; we hear Db–C motives in the bass (**Piano example**); and we arrive on an open cadence. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 23 in F Minor, op. 57 [*Appassionata*], movement 1, coda, parts 2–3.)
 4. Part 4—marked "*più allegro*," "faster"—begins with an explosive closed cadence to the tonic F minor. Theme 2 begins quietly but soon becomes brutally loud and dissonant.
 5. In part 5, violent, gunshot-like groups of three repeated chords are heard up and down the piano in what is an extended closed cadence, *fortissimo*!
 6. Finally, in part 6 of the coda, theme 1 rises and falls one last time, disappearing into the depths of the piano, accompanied by a shivering *tremolo*. The final six measures of the movement consist solely of the three pitches that make up a tonic F minor chord.
 7. Once again, even as the movement ends, there is no sense of release of tension—just a sort of "fizzling out." We are left with a vague sense of frustration: the movement is over, but the "story" is not! (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 23 in F Minor, op. 57 [*Appassionata*], movement 1, coda, parts 4–6.)
- I. What does it all mean, the overwhelmingly dark tone of this movement and Beethoven's studied avoidance of harmonic closure, the sort of "closure" that can only be supplied by powerfully felt closed cadences?
1. Various "meanings" have been ascribed to this music, attesting to its power to evoke metaphorical significance deep within our collective psyches.
 2. For me, the movement—and the sonata as a whole—is about the search for answers to questions regarding existence. All the unresolved cadences in this first movement reflect a sort Faustian desire to know and understand all, only to discover, at the end, that there is no "resolution," there are no "answers," only nothingness.
- II. The second movement is a necessary break between the intense outer movements, the calm between the storms.
- A. The theme is a gentle, sonorous, chorale-like tune in binary form, meaning that it is structured in two parts, with each part immediately repeated: a b b. The theme is in Db major—the same key Beethoven used for

the final appearance of theme 2 in the first movement. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 23 in F Minor, op. 57 [*Appassionata*], movement 2, theme.)

- B. This calm, quiet theme and the three variations that follow are, collectively, “music of relative inaction,” music rooted in Db major and constrained within the predictable confines of theme and variations form, music that stands in stark contrast to the relentless turmoil and angst of the outer movements.
 - C. We’ll advance directly to the coda of the movement, which begins with an abbreviated version of the theme in a sort of Cubist presentation, with each phrase heard in a different register of the piano. The music comes to an open cadence, and instead of the expected resolution, two diminished-seventh chords—that incredibly dissonant construct that in the opera house was considered the “chord of terror”—suddenly and unexpectedly appear. The first one is *pianissimo* and the second is *fortissimo*. (**Piano examples.**)
 - D. What happened to the expected resolution to Db major? These shattering dissonances wipe the harmonic slate clean, and they cannot possibly be harbingers of good news.
 - E. Before we have a chance to react, the third and final movement begins with a brutal introduction: a series of loud, long/short diminished-seventh chords that obliterates any remaining sense of calm that might have lingered from the second movement. The third movement introduction continues with a quiet, rippling, descending line in F minor that slowly but steadily gains momentum.
 - F. We will listen to the coda of the second movement theme and variations form, the interrupted cadence and the transition to the third movement, followed by the vicious third movement introduction. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 23 in F Minor, op. 57 [*Appassionata*], movement 2, coda, movement 3, introduction.)
- III. As the third movement begins, we’re back in F minor. We will listen to the entire exposition of this third movement sonata form.
- A. Theme 1 begins with a scurrying sixteenth-note line that, in the opera house, would represent the perpetual, rising/falling motion of a storm. Slowly, a series of short-long motives is superimposed over this “storm” music, coalescing eventually into what is heard in the following example. (**Piano example.**) The modulating bridge that follows is dominated by the storm element of theme 1.
 - B. Theme 2 is a compact, almost obsessive theme in C minor, a theme that offers no relief at all from the relentless darkness of the movement to this point. (**Piano example.**)
 - C. The cadence material combines the storm element of theme 1 with explosive cadential chords and concludes with a huge Gb diminished-seventh arpeggio that rises, then falls back into the depths of the piano. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 23 in F Minor, op. 57 [*Appassionata*], movement 3, exposition.)
 - D. As in the first movement, Beethoven indicates that this exposition is not to be repeated; however, he does indicate that the development section and the recapitulation should be repeated, thereby guaranteeing that the unrelentingly dark, stormy, and modulatory music of the development section will become the dominant element of the movement. We hear the development section in its entirety, ending with a huge, extended open cadence that will only be resolved by the beginning of the recapitulation. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 23 in F Minor, op. 57 [*Appassionata*], movement 3, development section.)
 - E. This tension won’t truly be resolved until the very last moments of the movement. We advance directly to the coda, in four parts that must be heard continuously to be fully appreciated.
 1. In part 1, the cadential music that concluded the recapitulation continues unabated, driven here into a frenzy by Beethoven’s indication “*sempre più allegro*,” meaning “go faster and faster!”
 2. Part 2 of the coda—marked “*presto*,” “very fast”—introduces an entirely new theme in binary form! Although it’s a little late to introduce new themes in this sonata, Beethoven wants this savage, triumphal march in F minor to be among the last things we remember when the sonata ends. Truly, at the end of the struggle, death is the only victor.
 3. In part 3 of the coda, the musical temperature continues to rise as the storm element of theme 1 is now heard in the new, faster tempo, with rippling arpeggiated chords in the accompaniment and accents on the second, “weak” beat of every measure.
 4. Finally, in part 4 of the coda, a cadential phrase in F minor is reached and is reinforced for the duration of the movement. A despairing descent into the depths of the piano is answered by a final explosive

series of three F minor chords, providing the first entirely unambiguous movement-ending cadence in the entire sonata! (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 23 in F Minor, op. 57 [*Appassionata*], movement 3, coda.)

- IV.** The *Appassionata* and *Waldstein* stand as complementary opposites. Each piece plumbs a depth of expression and explores a range of pianism that was utterly new to the piano sonata at the time it was composed. Along with Beethoven's Third and Fifth Symphonies, the *Appassionata* and the *Waldstein* remain the quintessential examples of Beethoven's "heroic" music.

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MOVEMENT I *Sonata form*

Allegro assai

Exposition

Theme 1

A theme stunning in both its simplicity and dramatic power

: **Part 1:** A falling/rising motive outlines an F minor (tonic) chord, followed by a trilling figure and an open cadence



F minor
pp

16 00.42

Part 2: The falling/rising F minor motive is now viciously interrupted by crashing explosive chords; it is as if the danger implied by the opening of the theme is here fully realized, as the music jerks back and forth between *p* and *ff*!

35 01.20

Theme 2: *Legato possibile, con molto espressione*

A stately, even regal theme. Like **Theme 1**, the opening of **Theme 2** is based on arpeggiated harmonies; the rhythmic profile of **Theme 2** is almost identical to **Theme 1**. They are just different enough to be perceived as different, though alike enough to be heard as powerfully related, perhaps two very different sides of the same personality!



A^b major
pp

op. 57, "Appassionata" (1804)

4 00.10

The opening phrase is immediately repeated, but a half step higher—on a G^b major chord—the ^bII, or Neapolitan, chord of F minor. “Beethoven’s contemporaries were shocked!” —Tovey

9

A lengthy cadential passage filled with pauses and ominous half-step motives (D^b-C) leads to an explosive arpeggiated figure and an open cadence

pp

f



O
P
E
N
C
A
D
E
N
C
E
P
A
U
S
E

24 00.59

Modulating Bridge

A brief but agitated passage characterized by repeated E^bs, the dominant (V) of the approaching new key of A^b major

Trilling passage followed by a nearly five-octave scale



51 01.55

Cadence Material

Part 1: A roiling, dramatic **Cadence Theme** seems to erupt from the lower register of the piano



(Note the presence in this passage of a B-double-flat major harmony—the \flat II, or Neapolitan, chord of the new key of A \flat minor!)

Development

65 02.26

Part 1: Theme 1

The A \flat s that concluded the **Exposition** are treated enharmonically as G \sharp s, which are used as a pivot modulation directly to the key of E major!

E major

78 02.58

Part 2: Modulatory sequence based on **Theme 1** and accompanied, alternately above and below, by tremolos and rapid passage work

extended →

105 03.47

Part 4: Gently rolling triplets continue to outline an A \flat dominant harmony, the dominant (V) of D \flat major

109 03.55

Part 5: Theme 2

The rolling triplets move into the bass and provide the accompaniment for a stately and initially tranquil version of the theme

D \flat major

123 04.23

Part 6: “The passion is beyond articulate utterance.” —Tovey
Following the bass line’s arrival to D \flat , a series of rippling diminished harmonies (an extreme dissonance) are heard without any reference to any theme; we are, truly, suspended over the abyss!

130 04.36

Part 7: Hammering D \flat s are heard high and low against an E diminished triad in tremolo, creating a huge and dissonant D \flat diminished seventh chord!

61 02.14

Part 2: Hocket-like passage sees the left-hand part descend deep into the bass, paving the way for . . .

65

Two A^bs as widely spaced as was possible on Beethoven's piano

(There is no **Exposition** repeat indicated; the **Development** follows immediately)

93 03.24

Part 3: Based on the **Modulating Bridge**; here the agitated repeated notes—A^bs—provide a degree of harmonic stability, acting as an extended dominant (V) of D^b major

Theme 2 rises in sequence, moving through the keys of B^b minor and G^b major

B^b minor — G^b major

The D^bs are now followed by Cs (see measure 9!) which, when combined with the E diminished triad, create the dominant (V) chord of the tonic key of F minor!

119

The modulation accelerates as the bass line rises chromatically

A[#] — B — C →

134

Low, throbbing, repeated Cs are all that remain; anxiously, we wait . . .

O
P
E
N

C
A
D
E
N
C
E

Recapitulation

135 04.46

Theme 1

Part 1: The C pedal tone continues to throb in the bass, effectively robbing us of the sense of resolution an F would have provided; we have arrived back home, but there is little sense of relief or satisfaction

F minor

O
P
E
N

C
A
D
E
N
C
E

174 06.08

Theme 2

Stately, even regal

Trilling passage sees the key shift back to F minor

3 1/2-
octave
scale

F major
pp

F minor



Coda

204 07.13

Part 1: Rising motive of **Theme 1** is heard beneath a flickering accompaniment high in the piano

F minor
pp

210 07.26

Part 2: *Tranquillo*

Theme 2 is heard high in the piano over a rolling accompaniment


F minor
p

238 08.32

Part 4: *Più allegro* (faster!)

An explosive closed cadence reintroduces **Theme 2**; it begins quietly but quickly becomes quite violent, and, in the process, loses the sense of calm lyricism that had earlier characterized it

F minor
ff *p*

cresc. . . . 

249 08.47

Part 5: Part 4 ended with three repeated Cs; violent groups of three repeated chords are now heard up and down the piano in what is an extended closed cadence!

ff

151 05.21

Part 2: The viciously interrupted phrase now bursts out in F MAJOR before a series of diminished (dissonant) harmonies redirect the music to the dark side!

163 05.47

Modulating Bridge
Agitated passage characterized, again, by repeated Cs, the dominant (V) of the tonic F minor

p

190 06.44

Cadence Material
Part 1: Cadence Theme
Roiling and dramatic

F minor

200 07.04

Part 2: Hocket like; as the left-hand part descends deep into the bass, arriving on a low F for the start of the . . .

213

The dissonance level increases as the music begins to modulate

cresc. . . .

218 07.40

Part 3: Thematic references disappear as a series of increasingly long arpeggios sweep up and down, modulating, eventually, back to F minor

ff

235

The activity slows; note the D^b-C motives in the bass

OP
PE
N
C
A
D
E
N
C
E

257 08.58

Part 6: Theme 1 rises and falls one last time, disappearing into the depths of the piano, accompanied by a shivering tremolo; during these final six measures, we hear only the three pitches that make up the F minor (tonic) triad: F-A^b-C



p

ppp

MOVEMENT II *Theme & Variations form*
Andante con moto

Theme

A gentle, chorale-like Theme in binary form, heard low and sonorously in the piano

Variation 1

01.49

The Theme, still heard in the middle low register of the piano, now moves in 8th notes (as opposed to the quarter notes of the Theme section above); the accompaniment begins to move into the piano's upper register

Variation 3

04.40

The Theme moves up yet another octave and is syncopated—that is, displaced—by one 8th note, all the while accompanied by flowing 32nd notes (demisemiquavers!)

Note: Beethoven's variations are CUMULATIVE, meaning that each successive variation moves higher on the piano and features faster note values than the last

Variation 2

03.26

The Theme moves up an octave; it is heard in 16th notes, embedded, as it is, in a 16th-note figure played by the pianist's right hand



Coda

05.48

The thick underbrush of 32nd notes disappears and an abbreviated version of the undecorated Theme returns, although now with each thematic phrase heard in a different register of the piano

O
P
E
N

C
A
D
E
N
C
E

Transition

06.56

The expected resolution never occurs; instead, two diminished 7th chords—the first *pp*, the second *ff*—break the quiet mood and pave the way to . . .

MOVEMENT III *Sonata form*
Allegro ma non troppo

Exposition

Introduction

07.12

Part 1: Feeling like railroad spikes driven through our foreheads, a series of loud, long/short diminished 7th chords obliterate any sense of calm that might still have lingered from **Movement II**

ff

20 07.28

Theme 1

Element 1: A scurrying 16th-note line as notable for its rhythm as for its pitches



F minor
pp

76 08.13

Theme 2

A compact, obsessive theme, **Theme 2** emphasizes the \flat II (Neapolitan) harmony of C minor and is heard under an accompaniment built from **Element 1** of **Theme 1**



a
C minor

a¹

5 07.16

Part 2: A quiet, rippling descending line in F minor slowly gains momentum as it is heard first in one hand, and then in two, as it descends

p ————— *f* ————— *ff* —————

28 07.35

Element 2: Initially superimposed above the scurrying Element 1, Element 2 consists of a series of short/long motives that gradually coalesce into



64 08.03

Modulating Bridge

The scurrying Element 1 of Theme 1 sequences directly to the key of C minor

96 08.28

Cadence Material

Consists of a combination of the scurrying Element 1 of Theme 1 and explosive cadential chords



G^b diminished
7th arpeggio

f

ff

Development

118 08.46

Part 1: The scurrying **Element 1** of **Theme 1** outlines an F dominant 7th chord, the dominant (V) chord of B^b minor

126 08.52

Part 2: The scurrying **Element 1** of **Theme 1** extended and developed in B^b minor

pp

f

B^b minor

p

153 09.17

Part 4: The scurrying **Element 1** of **Theme 1**; heard in imitation at first, the lines collapse inward on themselves and, by the conclusion of this part, are heard in unison

168 09.24

Part 5: The grandmother of extended dominants! Alternating hands pound out the dominant C of the home key of F minor

Recapitulation

212 10.01

Theme 1

A slightly abbreviated version of the theme sees **Element 2** come in almost immediately after **Element 1**

F minor

256 10.37

Modulating Bridge

The scurrying **Element 1** of **Theme 1** moves away from, and then back to, the tonic key of F minor

f

Coda

300b 13.44

Part 1: The incredible, driving cadential music that characterized the conclusion of the **Cadence Material** continues, driven forward by the indication: *sempre più allegro*, meaning "faster and faster"!

308 13.50

Part 2: *Presto*

Coda Theme

An entirely new theme in binary form bursts from the piano like the rattle of musket fire (I kid us not!)

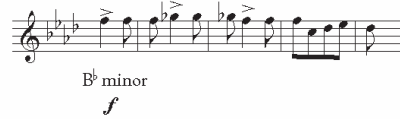
F minor

ff *sf* *p* etc.

a *b*

142 09.04

Part 3: A new-sounding, syncopated theme bursts forth; it is, in actuality, derived from **Theme 2** and is heard above a tremolo-like accompaniment



176

Upward rippling arpeggios arrive on the VII^{o7} of F minor

192

A huge, almost four-octave arpeggio is followed by a slowly descending bass line and a series of dominant (V) chords; we wait—we pray!—for resolution!

268 10.46

Theme 2

Compact, obsessive theme

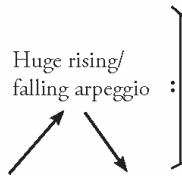
a
F minor

a'

288 11.02

Cadence Material

The scurrying Element 1 of **Theme 1** and explosive cadential chords



325b 14.10

Part 3: The musical temperature continues to rise as the scurrying **Element 1** of **Theme 1** is now heard in the new tempo with explosive, rippling arpeggiated chords in the accompaniment and accents on the second (weak) beat of each measure!

f



ff



fff

341 14.19

Part 4: Cadential phrase

F minor has been achieved, and will be reinforced for the duration, as arpeggios shred the musical texture, finally sinking into the lower register of the piano for a final, explosive series of three F minor chords

Glossary

Academy: Public concert in 18th-century Vienna, Austria.

Adagio: Slow.

Allegretto (It.): Fast, but not as fast as allegro.

Allegro (It.): Lively, somewhat fast.

Andante: Walking speed.

Andantino: Less than walking speed.

Arpeggio: Chord broken up into consecutively played notes.

Augmented: (1) Major or perfect interval extended by a semi-tone; for example, augmented sixth: C–A sharp. (2) Notes that are doubled in value; for example, a quarter note becomes a half note. Augmentation is a device for heightening the drama of a musical section by extenuating the note values of the melody.

Baroque: Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century artistic style characterized by extreme elaboration. In music, the style was marked by the complex interplay of melodies, as manifest, for example, in a fugue.

Bridge: Musical passage linking one section or theme to another. (See **Transition**.)

Broken octave: Interval of eight notes in which the bottom note is played first, followed by the top note.

Cadence: Short harmonic formulas that close a musical section or movement. The commonest formula is dominant–tonic (V–I). (1) A *closed* (or *perfect*) *cadence* fully resolves: The dominant is followed by the expected tonic. (2) An *open* (or *imperfect*) *cadence* is a temporary point of rest, usually on an unresolved dominant. (3) A *deceptive* (or *interrupted*) *cadence* is one in which the dominant resolves to some chord other than the expected tonic.

Cadenza: Passage for solo instrument in an orchestral work, usually a concerto, designed to showcase the player's skills.

Chromatic: Scale in which all the pitches are present. On a keyboard, this translates as moving consecutively from white notes to black notes.

Classical: Designation given to works of art of the 17th and 18th centuries, characterized by clear lines and balanced form.

Coda: Section of music that brings a sonata-allegro movement to a close.

Concertmaster: In early terminology, conductor; in modern terminology, the principal first violinist.

Consonance: Stable and resolved interval or chord; a state of musical rest.

Crescendo: Getting louder.

Da capo: Back to the top, or beginning (instruction in a score).

Development: Section in a Classical sonata-allegro movement in which the main themes are developed.

Diminished: Minor or perfect interval that is reduced by one semi-tone; for example, minor seventh, C–B flat, becomes diminished when the minor is reduced by one semi-tone to become C sharp–B flat. Diminished sevenths are extremely unstable harmonies that can lead in a variety of harmonic directions.

Dissonance: Unresolved and unstable interval or chord; a state of musical tension.

Dominant: Fifth note of a scale and the key of that note; for example, G is the dominant of C. The second theme in a Classical sonata-allegro exposition first appears in the dominant.

Double fugue: Complex fugue with two subjects, or themes.

Drone: Note or notes, usually in the bass, sustained throughout a musical section or composition; characteristic of bagpipe music.

Dynamics: Degrees of loudness, for example, *piano* (quiet) and *forte* (loud), indicated in a musical score.

Enharmonic: Notes that are identical in sound but with different spellings, depending on the key context; for example, C sharp and D flat.

Enlightenment: Eighteenth-century philosophical movement characterized by rationalism and positing that individuals are responsible for their own destinies and all men are born equal.

Eroica: Sobriquet, literally meaning “heroic,” given to Beethoven’s Symphony No. 3.

Exposition: Section in a Classical sonata-allegro movement in which the main themes are exposed, or introduced.

Fermata: Pause.

Flat: Note that has been lowered by one half-tone in pitch; symbolized by b .

Forte (It.): Loud.

Fortissimo (It.): Very loud.

French Overture: Invented by the French composer Jean Baptiste Lully, court composer to King Louis XIV. The French Overture was played at the theater to welcome the king and to set the mood for the action on the stage. It is characterized by its grandiose themes; slow, stately tempo; dotted rhythms; and sweeping scales.

Fugato: Truncated fugue in which the exposition is not followed by true development.

Fugue: Major, complex Baroque musical form, distantly related to the round, in which a theme (or subject) is repeated at different pitch levels in succession and is developed by means of various contrapuntal techniques.

Gesamtkunstwerk: All-inclusive artwork or art form, containing music, drama, poetry, dance, and so on; term coined by Richard Wagner.

Hemiola: Temporary use of a displaced accent to produce a feeling of changed meter. Beethoven uses it to effect an apparent change from triple (3/4) meter to duple (2/4) meter, without actually changing the meter.

Home key: Main key of a movement or composition. (See **Tonic**.)

Homophonic: Musical passage or piece that has one main melody and everything else is accompaniment.

Interval: Distance in pitch between two tones; for example, C–G (upwards) = a fifth.

Inversion: Loosely applied to indicate a reversal in direction; for example, a melody that goes up, goes down in inversion and vice versa. Its strict definitions are as follows: (1) Harmonic inversion: The bottom note of an interval, or chord, is transferred to its higher octave, or its higher note is transferred to its lower octave; for example, C–E–G (played together) becomes E–G–C or E–C–G. (2) Melodic inversion: An ascending interval (one note played after the other) is changed to its corresponding descending interval and vice versa; for example, C–D–E becomes C–B–A.

K. numbers: Koechel numbers, named after L. von Koechel, are a cataloging identification attached to works by Mozart.

Key: Central tonality, named after the main note of that tonality.

Largo (It.): Broad, slow.

Major/minor key system: Two essential modes, or “pitch palettes,” of European tonal music; *major* is generally perceived as being the brighter sounding of the two, and *minor*, the darker sounding of the two.

Measure (abbr. ms.): Metric unit; space between two bar lines.

Melisma: Tightly wound, elaborate melodic line.

Meter: Rhythmic measure, for example, triple meter (3/4), in which there are three beats to the bar, or duple meter (2/4), in which there are two beats to the bar.

Metric modulation: Main beat remains the same while the rhythmic subdivisions change. This alters the meter without disturbing the tempo.

Minuet: Graceful and dignified dance in moderately slow three-quarter time of the 17th and 18th centuries.

Minuet and trio: Form of a movement (usually the third) in a Classical symphony. The movement is in ternary (ABA) form, with the first minuet repeated after the trio and each section itself repeated.

Modal ambiguity: Harmonic ambiguity, in which the main key is not clearly identified.

Mode: Major or minor key (in modern Western usage).

Modulating bridge: Passage of music that progresses from one key area to another.

Modulation: Change from one key to another.

Motive: Short musical phrase that can be used as a building block in compositional development.

Movement: Independent section within a larger work.

Musette: (1) Bagpipe common in Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries. (2) Piece of music in rustic style with a drone bass.

Musical form: Overall formulaic structure of a composition, for example, sonata form; also the smaller divisions of the overall structure, such as the development section.

Octave: Interval of eight notes, including bottom and top notes; for example, from C to C¹.

Ostinato: Motive that is repeated over and over again.

Overture: Music that precedes an opera or play.

Pedal note: Pitch sustained for a long period of time against which other changing material is played. A pedal harmony is a sustained chord serving the same purpose.

Pianissimo (It.): Very quiet.

Piano (It.): Soft or quiet.

Piano trio: Composition for piano, violin, and cello.

Pivot modulation: A tone common to two chords is used to effect a smooth change of key. For example, F sharp–A–C sharp (F sharp minor triad) and F–A–C (F major triad) have A in common. This note can serve as a pivot to swing the mode from F sharp minor to F major.

Pizzicato (It.): Very short (plucked) notes.

Polyphony: Dominant compositional style of the pre-Classical era, in which multiple melodies are played together (linear development), as opposed to one melody played with harmonic accompaniment.

Prestissimo: Very fast.

Presto: Fast.

Quartet: (1) Ensemble of four instruments. (2) Piece for four instruments.

Recapitulation: Section following the development in a sonata-allegro movement, in which the main themes return in their original form.

Recitative: Operatic convention in which the lines are half sung, half spoken.

Retrograde: Backwards.

Retrograde inversion: Backwards and upside down.

Ritardando (It., abbr. *ritard*): Gradually getting slower.

Ritornello (It.): Refrain

Romanticism: Artistic movement of the 19th century that stressed emotion over intellect and celebrated the boundlessness, the fantastic, and the extremes of experience.

Rondo (It.): Musical form in which a principal theme returns—like a refrain—after various contrasting episodes.

Scherzando (It.): In a joking manner.

Scherzo (It.): “Joke”; name given by Beethoven and his successors to designate a whimsical, often witty, fast movement in triple time.

Semi-tone: Smallest interval in Western music; on the keyboard, the distance between a black note and a white note; also, B–C and E–F.

Sequence: Successive repetitions of a motive at different pitches. A compositional technique for extending melodic ideas.

Sharp: Note that has been raised one half-tone in pitch; symbolized by #.

Six-four chord: Second inversion of a chord; in a Classical concerto, it is used to indicate the beginning of the soloist’s cadenza.

Sonata: Traditionally, a composition for piano or some other instrument with piano accompaniment. At least one of its movements is in sonata form; frequently, both the first and last movements are in sonata form or some variation of it.

Sonata-allegro form (also known as sonata form): Most important musical structure of the Classical era. It is based on the concept of dramatic interaction between two contrasting themes and structured in four parts, sometimes with an introduction to the exposition, or first part. The exposition introduces the main themes that will be developed in the development section. The themes return in the recapitulation section and the movement is closed with a coda.

Sonata-rondo form: Movement that combines essential characteristics of both sonata-allegro form and rondo form.

Stringendo (It.): Compressing time; getting faster.

String quartet: (1) Ensemble of four stringed instruments: two violins, viola, and cello. (2) Composition for such an ensemble.

Sturm und Drang (Ger.): “Storm and Stress”; late-18th-century literary movement.

Subdominant: Pitch (or chord based on that pitch) that is one pitch below the dominant (fifth note of the scale).

Symphony: Large-scale instrumental composition for orchestra, containing several movements. The Viennese Classical symphony usually had four movements.

Syncopation: Displacement of the expected accent from a strong beat to a weak beat and vice versa.

Theme and variations: Musical form in which a theme is introduced, then treated to a series of variations on some aspect of that theme.

Tonic: First note of the scale; main key of a composition or musical section.

Transition (or bridge): Musical passage linking two sections.

Triad: Chord consisting of three notes: the root, the third, and the fifth; for example, C–E–G, the triad of C major.

Trio: (1) Ensemble of three instruments. (2) Composition for three instruments. (3) Type of minuet, frequently rustic in nature and paired with another minuet to form a movement in a Classical-era symphony.

Triplet: Three notes occurring in the space of one beat.

Tritone: Interval of six semitones that produces an extreme dissonance and begs for immediate resolution.

Viennese Classical style: Style that dominated European music in the late 18th century. It is characterized by clarity of melodies, harmonies, and rhythms and balanced, proportional musical structures.

Voice: A pitch or register, commonly used to refer to the four melodic pitches: soprano, alto, tenor, and bass.

Biographical Notes

Beethoven, Casper Karl van (1774–1815): Beethoven’s brother. A failed musician and occasional business manager for his brother Ludwig, Casper’s death in 1815 triggered the long and painful legal battle over his son, Karl, the only child of any of the Beethoven brothers.

Beethoven, Johann van (c. 1740–1792): Beethoven’s father. A tenor in the employ of the Electoral Court, he was a weak man overshadowed by his dominating father. An alcoholic given to violence, he attempted to make his son another Mozart. All he succeeded in doing was making Beethoven hate him and, by association, any other authority figure as well.

Beethoven Johanna van (c. 1785–1868): Beethoven’s sister-in-law, the wife of Casper Karl, and the mother of Beethoven’s nephew, Karl. She was the victim of Beethoven’s legal machinations, which ultimately gave him custody of her son, Karl, after a five-year struggle, in 1820. Incredibly, she ultimately forgave Beethoven and was with him when he died in March 1827.

Beethoven, Karl van (1806–1858): Beethoven’s nephew. Karl was the object of a long and terrible custody battle between Beethoven and his mother, and his life was torn apart by his uncle. His suicide attempt in 1826 proved to be the emotional beginning of the end for Beethoven. Karl went on to live a long life as a minor official of the Austrian government.

Beethoven, Nikolaus Johann van (1776–1848): Beethoven’s brother. An apothecary by profession and landowner.

Brentano, Antonie (1780–1869): Viennese-born aristocrat. She was likely the only woman to have ever returned Beethoven’s love. The object of the “Immortal Beloved” affair of 1812, Antonie and Beethoven remained friends until his death 15 years later.

Brentano, Maximiliana (1802–?): Daughter of Antonie Brentano and the dedicatee of the Piano Sonata No. 30 in E Major, op. 109 (1820).

Czerny, Carl (1791–1857): Piano prodigy and student of Beethoven’s. Czerny was part of Beethoven’s inner circle and was intimately acquainted with practically all of Beethoven’s piano works, many of which he could play from memory. He was a tireless advocate for Beethoven’s piano sonatas and, in volume 4 of his *Complete Theoretical and Practical Pianoforte School*, he gave detailed instructions on how to perform each of them.

Ertmann, Dorothea von (1781–1849): A superb pianist and a student and devotee of Beethoven, Baroness von Ertmann was the dedicatee of the Piano Sonata No. 28 in A Major, op. 101 (1816).

Haydn, Joseph (1732–1808): The godfather of German/Austrian music.

Lichnowsky, Prince Karl (1756–1814): Beethoven’s single most important patron. An early champion of the composer’s, Lichnowsky induced the whole of the Austro-Hungarian aristocracy to support Beethoven.

Lobkowitz, Prince Franz Joseph Maximilian von (1772–1816): A leading patron of the arts in Vienna, he quickly befriended the young Beethoven and was second only to Prince Lichnowsky in his patronage.

Neeffe, Christian Gottlob (1748–1798): Beethoven’s single most important teacher. A Lutheran and a great admirer of Johann Sebastian Bach, Neeffe came to Bonn around 1779 and was appointed court organist in 1781. Beethoven studied keyboard and composition with Neeffe from around 1780–1792.

Ries, Ferdinand (1784–1838): Son of the Bonn court musician Franz Ries, Ferdinand Ries was taught piano as a child by Beethoven. In October 1801, he moved to Vienna, where he became indispensable to Beethoven, helping him in his dealings with musicians and publishers, finding lodgings, and generally looking after him as his hearing declined.

Rudolph, Johann Joseph Rainer, Archduke of Austria (1788–1831): Archduke Rudolph was the youngest son of Emperor Leopold II and youngest brother of Emperor Franz. A composer of genuine talent, he was Beethoven’s friend and student and Beethoven’s most important patron in his later years. The archduke was the dedicatee of both the *Farewell* Sonata, op. 81a, and the *Hammerklavier*, op. 106.

Schindler, Anton Felix (1795–1864): Beethoven’s secretary and assistant from 1820–1825. While leaving us with many firsthand accounts of Beethoven’s life and words, Schindler altered many of Beethoven’s written documents after his death and filled his early biography of Beethoven with fabrications.

Swieten, Baron Gottfried van (1733–1803): A good friend of Mozart and Haydn and one of the young Beethoven’s first and most enthusiastic patrons in Vienna.

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Beethoven Biographies

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Solomon, Maynard. *Beethoven*, 2nd rev. ed. New York: Schirmer Books, 1998; ISBN 0-02-864717-3. A psychobiography that reads like a novel. Solomon is, at once, a scholar and an extraordinary and responsible analyst. An entirely satisfying book. If you own only one book on Beethoven, his life and music, this is the one it should be.

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Rosen, Charles. *Beethoven's Piano Sonatas: A Short Compendium*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002; ISBN 0-300-09070-6. Charles Rosen is one of the great pianists and musical thinkers of his generations. This is by far the most lucid book available on the sonatas, and it is accompanied with a CD full of musical examples played by Rosen himself.

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Beethoven's Piano Sonatas
Part III
Professor Robert Greenberg



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Professor Greenberg has composed more than 45 works for a wide variety of instrumental and vocal ensembles. Recent performances of his works have taken place in New York, San Francisco, Chicago, Los Angeles, England, Ireland, Greece, Italy, and the Netherlands, where his *Child's Play* for String Quartet was performed at the Concertgebouw of Amsterdam. He has received numerous honors, including three Nicola de Lorenzo Composition Prizes and three Meet-the-Composer Grants. Recent commissions have come from the Koussevitzky Foundation at the Library of Congress, the Alexander String Quartet, the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, San Francisco Performances, the Strata Ensemble, and the XTET ensemble. Professor Greenberg is a board member and an artistic director of COMPOSERS, INC., a composers' collective/production organization based in San Francisco. His music is published by Fallen Leaf Press and CPP/Belwin and is recorded on the *Innova* label.

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Please note that many musical examples are drawn from *Beethoven: The Complete Piano Sonatas* from Claude Frank's 10-CD set on the Music & Arts Programs of America label.

Beethoven's Piano Sonatas

Scope:

Beethoven's 32 piano sonatas stand as a singular body of work in the keyboard literature. What makes them unique is their organic quality. Taken together, as a single corpus, they reveal their composer's compositional and artistic development of the genre, from the terse and powerful first sonata of 1795 to the revolutionary *Hammerklavier* Sonata of 1818 and the radical last three sonatas of 1820-22. Not content to work within the constraints of a pre-existing aesthetic, Beethoven pushed the genre to extremes, artistically, compositionally and technically, eventually writing music for an "idealized" piano that did not exist in his day, one that only came into existence some 40 years after his death.

The piano was Beethoven's personal voice and his musical laboratory. Continuously innovative, by the time he had written the *Pathétique* Sonata of 1799, Beethoven had moved beyond the constraints and the ideal of the Classical style. From 1800 onward, with a whole series of amazing sonatas such as the so-called *Funeral March*, the *Moonlight*, the *Pastoral* and the *Tempest*, it was as if he were redefining the genre from piece to piece. In 1804 Beethoven composed two cornerstones of the piano repertoire, among the greatest examples of his "heroic" style, the *Waldstein* and *Appassionata* Sonatas. The late piano sonatas, beginning with op. 101 of 1816, and including the *Hammerklavier*, op. 106, and the last three sonatas, op. 109, 110 and 111, became increasingly radical in terms of their harmonic usage, form and expressive content. Perhaps, most importantly, these last five sonatas reveal that Beethoven had come to grips with the duality of his musical character—an experimental composer of the Classical era whose compositional inspiration was the great Baroque composer, Johann Sebastian Bach. This is most perfectly manifest in his final Piano Sonata in C Minor, op. 111 of 1822, the first movement of which rather perfectly reconciles the Baroque genre fugue with Classical-era sonata form and ends on a note of sublime and ethereal calm.

This course presents a chronologically-based discussion of all 32 of Beethoven's sonatas, with a great deal of in-depth analysis. WordScore Guides™ are provided in the booklets as an aid to analysis for Piano Sonata no. 1 in F Minor, op. 2, no. 1, Piano Sonata no. 8 in C Minor, op. 13 (*Pathétique*), Piano Sonata no. 23 in F Minor, op. 57 (*Appassionata*), and Piano Sonata no. 29 in Bb Major, op. 106 (*Hammerklavier*).

Lecture Seventeen

They Deserve Better, Part 1

Scope: In this lecture, we'll examine two Beethoven sonatas that certainly deserve more attention than they are generally accorded: no. 22 in F Major, op. 54, of 1804, and no. 24 in F# Major, op. 78, of 1809. Composed in between the *Waldstein* and *Appassionata* and bearing an opus number (54) that places it directly between the *Waldstein* Sonata (op. 53) and the Third Symphony, the *Eroica* (op. 55), the Piano Sonata no. 22 in F Major was doomed from the start: overshadowed and underappreciated, rendered almost invisible by its better known and expressively more over-the-top pianistic siblings, the *Waldstein* and *Appassionata* Sonatas. And op. 54 is not the only sonata of Beethoven's to share this fate.

Outline

- I. The Piano Sonata in F Major, op. 54, is in two movements. The first, marked “in the tempo of a minuet,” is a rondo-like movement intended as a parody of a minuet and trio. The second movement is a comic, perpetual-motion–type movement in an ersatz sonata form.
 - A. Op. 54 is an inspired, virtuosic, and genuinely experimental piece of music. It is not, however, overtly dramatic, nor does it struggle with any great metaphorical or metaphysical issues. It's just music, pure and straightforward.
 - B. In a 19th-, 20th-, and 21st-century world that views the post-*Eroica* Beethoven as a titan shaking his fist at the gods, a piece such as op. 54 has little chance of gaining popularity.
- II. By 1802, Beethoven had single-handedly rendered the expressive significance and formal limitations of the minuet and trio form obsolete. In the first movement of op. 54, however, he adds insult to injury by writing a parody of minuet and trio form.
 - A. The “minuet” theme is a fabulous and subtle bit of writing.
 1. Lyric and elegant, it nevertheless can hardly get through two measures without stopping on a closed cadence.
 2. The mock formality of this theme and the ancient nobility it is meant to represent are the dual objects of Beethoven's subtle and effective parody. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 22 in F Major, op. 54, movement 1, minuet theme, A.)
 - B. The contrasting episode is a perpetual-motion *etude*—an “exercise”—in running octaves and sixths.
 1. Where the minuet theme had to stop for breath every few beats, this contrasting episode moves like a runaway truck, its energy and drive unstoppable. Where the minuet theme was dainty, subtle, and elegant, the contrasting episode is coarse, youthful, and inelegant.
 2. Could Beethoven possibly have given us a better portrait of himself, hemmed in, as he was, by the “ancient” nobility to whom, in 1804, he still owed his life and livelihood?
 3. Note how this contrasting episode eventually quiets and fragments, in the process isolating the three-note motive heard in the following example, a motive that will be used to transit back to the minuet theme. (**Piano example. Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 22 in F Major, op. 54, movement 1, contrasting episode B.)
 - C. A slightly elaborated version of the minuet theme follows. This, in turn, is followed by an abbreviated version of the contrasting episode, as raucous as the first. This abbreviated version of the contrasting episode again quiets, fragments, and comes to rest on an open cadence. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 22 in F Major, op. 54, movement 1, minuet theme, contrasting episode B¹, open cadence.)
 - D. The minuet theme again resumes, although now elaborated, almost energetically so. It's as if the old girl has perked up a bit as a result of being in such close proximity to “that husky young ruffian” portrayed by the contrasting episodes!
 1. Note that these “elaborations” of the minuet theme are not merely ornamental but generative, in that the thematic phrases become longer, the harmonic content of the theme becomes more complex, and many of the closed cadences are bridged over, creating a new momentum.

2. Note, too, the delicate cadenza and the open cadence that concludes this elegantly elaborated thematic statement. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 22 in F Major, op. 54, movement 1, minuet theme A² cadenza, open cadence.)
- E. One last statement of the minuet theme follows, and after a surprisingly dramatic and dissonant moment, the movement ends quietly. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 22 in F Major, op. 54, movement 1, conclusion.)
 - F. What form, then, is this movement? It is certainly not a minuet and trio, nor is it a *double minuet*. We could call it a rondo with only one contrasting episode, or we could call it a theme and variations/rondo, because each time the minuet theme returns, it is more highly elaborated. We might be wise to follow the advice of the eminent German musicologist Hans Sachs and let the movement: “Find its own rules without worrying [about why] it doesn’t fit ours” (Scherman, Biancolli, 752).
- III. If you do not already know the second movement of this sonata, you will find it phenomenal. On the one hand, it is a piece of radical, experimental art—a test of how much mileage Beethoven can get out of a single thematic idea and how many harmonic areas he can explore with that single idea. On the other hand, the movement is a throwback to the Baroque era. How can a single movement be both a radical experiment and a throwback to the Baroque?
- A. What should we call the form of this movement. “Quasi-sonata form”? “Ersatz sonata form”? The truth is that we can call the movement whatever we want to call it, because there is no precedent for it; it is entirely “contextual,” relevant only to itself.
 - B. The “exposition” introduces only one theme: a rising, arpeggiated melody in continuous sixteenth notes, initially heard in the bass. The theme is then imitated in the treble. (**Piano examples.**)
 - C. The theme bounces between bass and treble, right and left hands, as the exposition moves forward. As we listen to the exposition in its entirety, be aware of the following three points.
 1. The ornate and “busy” nature of the theme and the motoric, perpetual motion of its rhythms imbue it with a Baroque sensibility.
 2. Both the exposition and the great majority of the movement are written for two melodic parts only: one melodic part for the right hand and one for the left.
 3. Finally, this movement is polyphonic in texture, meaning that neither the right-hand part nor the left-hand part is more important than (or accompanimental to) the other; rather, the parts are of equal importance. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 22 in F Major, op. 54, movement 2, exposition.)
 - D. Beethoven indicates that this “exposition” should be repeated, thus giving grist to those who would identify the movement as being in sonata form.
 - E. What I believe to be the obvious influence and inspiration behind this movement is nowhere discussed in the literature. It is Johann Sebastian Bach’s Fugue in E Minor for Two Voices from the first book of the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, composed around 1720.
 1. In the following examples, we hear Beethoven’s theme, followed by Bach’s subject. (**Piano examples.**)
 2. We next hear Beethoven’s “exposition” of his theme. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 22 in F Major, op. 54, movement 2, exposition.)
 3. Then we hear Bach’s exposition and first restatement of his subject. (**Musical selection:** J. S. Bach, Fugue no. 10 in E Minor from the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, Book I [c. 1720].)
 4. The resemblance between Bach’s fugue and Beethoven’s sonata movement goes far beyond the fact that their themes are alike and that they’re both polyphonic pieces written *a due voci*—“for two voices.”
 - a. A fugue, by its nature, is both an exploration and an examination—an exploration of how much mileage can be gotten out of a single theme—the *fugue subject*—and an examination of how restatements of that fugue subject in different keys shed new light on the meaning and nature of the subject.
 - b. Beethoven’s “ersatz sonata form” movement does precisely the same thing. Like a fugue, it is a monothematic construct. Like a fugue, it is a polyphonic composition in which rhythmic momentum and continuity are of utmost importance; no stopping for closed cadences, no stopping at all, as a matter of fact, until the end.

- c. And, like a fugue, the second movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata op. 54 is an exploration of just how much mileage Beethoven can get out of a single, Baroque-styled "theme."
 - 5. However, unlike a fugue, Beethoven's movement is not organized around modulatory episodes and thematic restatements but, rather, around the processes of sonata form: thematic statement (in the exposition), thematic development (in a full-blown development section), thematic return (with a recapitulation), and thematic closure (in a coda).
 - 6. Thus, Beethoven's movement is both experimental—because there is no other movement of music remotely like it—and a throwback, in that its essential inspiration is a monothematic process perfected by Beethoven's foremost musical influence, Johann Sebastian Bach.
- F. Let's hear the remainder of the movement beginning with the development section. The recapitulation begins 1 minute and 26 seconds into the excerpt, and the coda—marked "*più allegro*"—begins 2 minutes and 9 seconds into the excerpt. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 22 in F Major, op. 54, movement 2, development, recapitulation, coda)
- IV. Between 1799 and 1804, Beethoven composed 12 piano sonatas. Between 1804 and 1809, he composed not a single one.
- A. Beethoven's neglect of the sonata genre stemmed from a variety of causes, including his desire to compose for orchestra, economic considerations, and his hearing loss.
 - B. He could not, however stay away from sonatas forever, and in 1809 and 1810, he composed yet another set of three sonatas, no. 24 in F# Major, op. 78; no. 25 in G Major, op. 79; and no. 26 in Eb Major, op. 81a [Farewell], the *Farewell* Sonata. The remainder of this lecture will focus on the first of these three, the Sonata no. 24 in F# Major.
- V. Op. 78 is rarely performed. Unfortunately, it's a work that's about subtlety, lyricism, and charm, three words that the music-consuming public does not want to associate with Beethoven's music of the year 1809. Like op. 54, op. 78 is a two-movement work, but again, we must be careful not to assume that a two-movement sonata is a lesser artwork than a three- or four-movement sonata. Think of it as not short but compact.
- A. We begin with the first movement "introduction," marked "*adagio cantabile*"—"slowly and singing." (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 24 in F# Major, op. 78, movement 1, exposition, "introduction.")
 - 1. For us to perceive a section of music as being an "introduction," it must fulfill three criteria, the first of which is that it must be the first section of music we hear in a given movement. Beethoven's "introduction" fulfills that criterion.
 - 2. Second, for something to be perceived as "introductory," it must lack a powerful harmonic or melodic profile, so that it sounds less substantial and less important than the music it precedes. Beethoven's "introduction" sounds like the beginning of a gorgeous slow movement. In terms of its melodic and harmonic profiles, this opening sounds complete and substantial; nothing "need" follow this music except more of the same.
 - 3. Finally, for something to be perceived as an "introduction," it generally will not be harmonically "complete" unto itself, meaning that it will usually end on an open cadence and, by doing so, shift the weight of the resolution to the thematic music that follows. Beethoven's introduction ends on a closed cadence and a pause.
 - 4. Beethoven's so-called "introduction" is, in reality, nothing of the sort. It's a self-standing fragment of the "slow movement" that this two-movement sonata otherwise lacks. Let's hear this opening passage again, followed by the graceful and lyric first theme of the first movement sonata form. The opening is not so much an "introduction," then, as it is a suggestion of "what might have been" had there been a slow movement. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 24 in F# Major, op. 78, movement 1, exposition, "introduction" and theme 1.)
 - 5. This first movement is a masterpiece of motivic development and transformation, with the opening notes of the "introduction" transformed into theme 1, the opening of the modulating bridge, theme 2, and the cadence material. We will not trace these events, because our focus in examining the F# Major Sonata is chiefly to demonstrate the degree to which lyricism and charm are its essential expressive messages.

- B.** Let's hear the entire exposition, starting with the *allegro*. Theme 2 is a glowing, pastoral, initially triplet-dominated theme in C# major that begins 46 seconds into the excerpt. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 24 in F# Major, op. 78, movement 1, exposition.)
- C.** The second movement is as quirky a movement as Beethoven ever wrote. The movement is a rondo, although it is, admittedly, a strange rondo. We hear the rondo theme—a short, punchy, upbeat theme with a number of oddly placed rests. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 24 in F# Major, op. 78, movement 2, rondo theme.)
- 1.** The first contrasting episode features a melody in the bass accompanied by fast, rising, two-note units. (**Piano example.**) About halfway through the episode, the melody in the bass ends, leaving only the rising, two-note units, sounding almost like musical bugs flitting about the piano. Let's listen from the beginning of the movement. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 24 in F# Major, op. 78, movement 2, rondo theme and first contrasting episode.)
 - 2.** The rondo theme returns, followed by varied version of the first contrasting episode. Let's hear the restatement of the rondo theme, followed by this second contrasting episode. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 24 in F# Major, op. 78, movement 2, rondo theme restatement and second contrasting episode.)
 - 3.** A third contrasting episode follows, consisting of a rising arpeggio figure, accompanied above by the same two-note units that we heard throughout the first contrasting episode. As in the first contrasting episode, the two-note units eventually take over the texture, leading to the next restatement of the rondo theme. This restatement is followed by passages that combine elements of both the first and second contrasting episodes, then more two-note units, a coda featuring another statement of the rondo theme, more two-note units, and so on.
 - 4.** The first and second contrasting episodes are so much alike and the two-note units are so ubiquitous, that everything starts to merge together, propelled throughout by tremendous rhythmic momentum. Let's listen to the remainder of the movement, beginning with the third contrasting episode. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 24 in F# Major, op. 78, movement 2, rondo, third contrasting episode—end.)
 - 5.** In this second movement “rondo,” the only thing we can say for certain is that both form and content are unusual.
- D.** The Sonata in F# Major is one of the strangest and most adventurous works in the repertoire. It's the only piece Beethoven ever composed in the rare key of F# major and, excluding the two “easy” sonatas of op. 49, it is—at about 7 minutes, 27 seconds, in performance—the shortest of all Beethoven's piano sonatas.

Lecture Eighteen

They Deserve Better, Part 2

Scope: Like the first movement of the Sonata in F Major, op. 54, the first movement of the Sonata in G Major, op. 79, is also a parody—this time, of the flashy and fluent Classically styled piano sonatas of Hummel and Clementi, which were quite popular at the time. By calling the first movement of Beethoven’s Piano Sonata in G Major a “parody,” we’re taking special note of a purposeful calculation of effect, a degree of artifice, through which Beethoven is telling his listeners that he is playing “that ‘Classical’ Hummel/Clementi game” and having a good time doing it. As we’ll see in this lecture, the parody is very subtle but no less in evidence for its nuance.

Outline

- I. To further understand the affectation and artifice in Beethoven’s Piano Sonata in G Major, we will begin by listening to the exposition of the first movement from beginning to end; it is a brilliant and compact bit of music, with not a single note wasted. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 25 in G Major, op. 79, movement 1, exposition.)
 - A. This music gives an overwhelming impression of rhythmic energy and momentum. There is no second theme to speak of, only, as we would expect in a sonata form movement, a second, “contrasting” key area near the end of the exposition.
 1. Theme 1 is unremarkable, even for Beethoven. It consists of an upward-bouncing tonic triad—here a G major chord—followed by a generally descending line in fast eighth notes. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 25 in G Major, op. 79, movement 1, theme 1.)
 2. Both the theme and the movement as a whole sound, on the surface, like the sonatinas of Muzio Clementi. True to form, Clementi’s sonatinas begin with themes that, just like Beethoven’s op. 79, open with an outline of the tonic triad, then proceed to “noodle.” We hear, for example, the first movements of Clementi’s Sonatinas in C major, op. 36, no. 1; G major, op. 36, no. 2; and C major, op. 36, no. 3. (**Piano examples.**)
 3. The word *sonatina* is the diminutive of *sonata*, and it means “little sonata,” implying that it is suited for “little hands”—children and other pianistic beginners. Often over the years, Beethoven’s Sonata in G Major, op. 79, has also been referred to as a sonatina, though Beethoven himself never referred to it that way. Although “little hands” may easily play its middle movement, the outer movements betray a subtle virtuosity that catches Beethoven at his game: Op. 79 is not a sonatina in the mold of Clementi but a parody of one.
 4. Beethoven indicates that the first movement should be played *presto alla tedesca*, meaning “very fast, in the German style of a *Ländler*,” which is a triple-meter German dance, a sort of early waltz.
 - B. The dance element of the movement comes to the forefront during the development section, which begins with a harmonic sidestep.
 1. Beethoven ends the exposition with a harmonic progression calculated to get him back to the key of G major for the repeat of the exposition. The last two measures of the exposition are played in the following example. (**Piano example.**)
 2. Quickly, we’re back in G major, ready for the exposition repeat. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 25 in G Major, op. 79, movement 1, theme 1.)
 3. Beethoven has decided to begin the development in the distantly related key of E major, a third away from G major. How does he transit the harmonic distance from G major—the end of the exposition—to E major—at the beginning of the development section? He doesn’t! He simply repeats the last two measures of the exposition in the key of E major. (**Piano example.**)
 4. It’s a bold, brilliant, fabulously funny and crude moment! As we listen, be aware of the dance element in the development and the fact that all the unexpected accents are characteristic of a *ländler*. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 25 in G Major, op. 79, movement 1, exposition conclusion, development, recapitulation opening.)
 - C. The recapitulation is so brief that Beethoven asks that both the development section and the recapitulation be repeated. The coda sees theme 1 bounce back and forth between the bass and the treble. Eventually, the

theme is embellished by a series of *acciaccatura*—grace notes of genuinely comic impact—followed by a bouncing but quiet conclusion. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 25 in G Major, op. 79, movement 1, coda.)

II. The second movement—an *andante*—is a *barcarolle*, a “boat song” modeled after the boat songs of the Venetian gondoliers.

- A. The movement is in three parts: A B A¹. The outer parts—the A and A¹ sections—are in G minor, and the middle section—B—is in Eb major. Like many *barcarolles*, Beethoven’s outer sections are scored as if they were “duets” for two sopranos. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 25 in G Major, op. 79, movement 2, A.)
- B. The middle section—B, in Eb major—is scored for a solo melodic voice only. While we listen, note the rising and falling groups of six notes (*sextuplets*) in the accompaniment, which provide an appropriately “watery” background environment for this “song of the gondolier.” (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 25 in G Major, op. 79, movement 2, B.)
- C. This movement, while delightful, is not characteristic of Beethoven—it’s not confessional or self-expressive but, rather, music as affectation, a wonderfully clever, good-spirited parody of certain preexisting musical genres and “types.”

III. The third movement rondo is short, compact, and goes by quickly.

- A. The rondo theme is characterized by what, in Beethoven’s day, would have been recognized as a galloping “hoofbeat” rhythm: an eighth note followed by two sixteenth notes: (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 25 in G Major, op. 79, movement 3, rondo theme.)
- B. As in every other movement in this sonata, there is a sense of artifice, of Beethoven playing with certain musical conventions. The phrase structure of the rondo theme is binary form (a a b b) in which each phrase is eight measures long and divides into 2 four-measure phrases and 4 two-measure subphrases.
- C. The first contrasting episode is in E minor and concludes with an extended dominant passage built from the hoofbeat motive of the rondo theme. When the rondo theme returns, it will be accompanied by rolling, triplet eighth notes. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 25 in G Major, op. 79, movement 3, first contrasting episode and rondo theme.)
- D. The second contrasting episode, in C major, is marked “*animato*,” meaning “with spirit.” Beethoven might have marked it “*alla militare*”—“as in the military”—because it has the sound and feel of a *tattoo*—a military exercise given as an entertainment, featuring galloping cavalry (given all the hoofbeat music we’ve heard to this point of the movement).
 - 1. Again, Beethoven uses the hoofbeat rhythm to transit back to the rondo theme, which will, in its final incarnation, be embellished and accompanied by rapid sixteenth-note figures in the bass.
 - 2. The coda grows directly out of this final thematic statement, and the movement ends with what must be interpreted as a wink: a long crescendo, and then, *subito piano*—suddenly *piano*—two closing chords quietly tuck the movement in and turn off the lights. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 25 in G Major, op. 79, movement 3, second contrasting episode, rondo theme, and coda.)

IV. We jump forward to 1814 and the Sonata op. 90 in E Minor (or, more accurately, the Sonata in E Minor/E Major, because the first of its two movements is in E minor, and the second is in E major).

- A. Beethoven did something in op. 90 that he’d never done before: he provided expressive instructions in German rather than Italian, probably feeling that the standard Italian terminology was not specific enough to convey the required meaning.
 - 1. In German, Beethoven indicates that the first movement be played “lively, and with feeling and expression throughout,” no small task given how lean and terse this first movement is. The first theme begins most abruptly, with a rising harmonic sequence that alternates loud with soft. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 27 in E Minor, op. 90, movement 1, theme 1.)
 - 2. We hear no artifice or affectation here! This is Beethoven as modernist, composing a theme of great pathos and tenderness. Note the “generative” motivic element of the movement, which is a falling third, first expressed in the very first moments of the sonata as a descent from a G down to an E and harmonized as in the second example that follows. (**Piano examples.**)

3. The theme ends with a cadential phrase that twice features a huge leap from the high register to the middle register of the piano. (**Piano example. Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 27 in E Minor, op. 90, movement 1, theme 1.) Expressively, these two huge downward leaps are like gigantic sighs of resignation. This theme, which began so forcefully and abruptly, ends sadly and poignantly. (**Piano examples.**)
 4. These sorts of discontinuities of high and low register, often within a single phrase, will characterize Beethoven's late compositional style, which we will encounter in Lecture Twenty.
- C. The modulating bridge is a stunning bit of writing. Not only does it transit and modulate from theme 1 to theme 2, but it also paves the way expressively for the weeping hysteria that marks theme 2. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 27 in E Minor, op. 90, movement 1, modulating bridge.)
 - D. What theme 2 lacks in "melodic profile" it more than makes up with expressive power. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 27 in E Minor, op. 90, movement 1, theme 2.)
 - E. A short, punchy bit of cadence material follows and leads to the hushed conclusion of the exposition. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 27 in E Minor, op. 90, movement 1, cadence material.)
 - F. The exposition has offered up a stunning variety of moods and states of being, almost all of them dark. The development section is a tour-de-force of registral dislocation (that is, jumping from one registral extreme to another) and thematic fragmentation and prolongation. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 27 in E Minor, op. 90, movement 1, development and recapitulation.)
 1. As an example of thematic fragmentation and prolongation, we turn to the last part of the development section, a section of music referred to in the textbooks as the *retransition*. It is during the retransition that the harmony "transits" back to the tonic key in preparation for the recapitulation.
 2. The easiest way to accomplish this retransition is to establish the dominant harmony of whatever key one wants to go to, and repeat that dominant harmony over and over until the listener knows that when that dominant chord resolves, the recapitulation has begun.
 3. Clearly, Beethoven did not bother to read the textbook. As we move toward Beethoven's later music, he increasingly avoids this sort of dominant preparation, preferring to work his way back to the recapitulation using motivic means, some unexpected harmonic device, or both. In the case of the first movement of the Piano Sonata in E Minor, op. 90, Beethoven uses thematic fragmentation and prolongation—a process of reduction—to get back to the recapitulation and the first theme.
 4. The final part of the development section begins as in the following example. (**Piano example.**) This is an extension and diminution (meaning a sped-up version) of the movement-opening descending third on which much of the movement is based, G–F#–E. (**Piano example.**) Again, we hear the first measure of the last part of the development section. (**Piano example.**)
 5. The next two measures reduce this figure to a 4-sixteenth-note descending unit—G–F#–E–D#—which is repeated, verbatim, no fewer than five times. (**Piano example.**)
 6. Beethoven then *augments*—that is, lengthens—the note values of this descending sixteenth-note motive to eighth notes, then quarter notes, all the while overlapping the motive with itself. The motive is then fragmented into three descending notes—G–F#–E—which are, of course, the three descending pitches that began the movement in the first place! (**Piano example.**)
 7. After another series of imitative entries based on these same three descending pitches, the recapitulation "emerges" from the three-note motives that preceded it! (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 27 in E Minor, op. 90, movement 1, retransition and recap opening.)
 8. We're not quite through with this retransition just yet, because the underlying harmony of the entire retransition—the entire final part of the development section—is a tonic E minor chord! The return of the tonic key at the beginning of the recapitulation has been prepared by 14 measures of the tonic key itself!
 9. In theory, this shouldn't work. The beginning of the recapitulation should sound utterly anticlimactic if the tonic E minor has already been established for 14 measures. But, of course, it works brilliantly, because in this movement, Beethoven has changed the rules of the game: the advent of the recapitulation is marked not by an arrival of E minor but by the "affirmation" of the descending minor third that opens theme 1, an "affirmation" prepared through the use of motivic fragmentation and prolongation.
- V. Movement 2 of the Piano Sonata in E Minor is a rondo of great lyric beauty. In E major where the first

movement was in E minor, lush where the first movement was austere, amiable and friendly in tone where the first movement was terse and often harsh, this second movement stands in complete contrast with the first.

- A. As we listen to the rondo theme, be aware of the following two points.
1. The theme would have been considered very up-to-date in 1814 ; it is in the new Italian *cantabile*, or *bel canto* style.
 2. Each phrase of the theme is immediately repeated (with a couple of changes) before moving on to the next phrase, creating an inner phrase structure of a¹ b b¹ a¹. These phrase repetitions create a long theme that is almost a self-standing piece of music. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 27 in E Minor, op. 90, movement 2, rondo theme.)
 3. In its effortless grace and lyricism, this theme in E major reminds us of the second movement theme of the *Pathétique* Sonata, a movement that is also structured as a rondo. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata in C Minor, op. 13 [*Pathétique*, 1799], movement 2, rondo theme opening.)
- B. The overall form of the second movement is A B A C A B A plus a coda, a rondo-sonata form, in that the first contrasting episode (B) returns in the tonic key near the end of the movement, and the second contrasting episode (C) is essentially a development section.
1. The first contrasting episode begins dramatically but soon enough evolves into a charming, music-box-like passage that leads directly back to the rondo theme, which is heard in its entirety of 32 measures. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 27 in E Minor, op. 90, movement 2, first contrasting episode and rondo theme opening.)
 2. The second contrasting episode (C) is developmental, moving through a long succession of keys before returning to the rondo theme, which is, again, heard in its full 32 measures. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 27 in E Minor, op. 90, movement 2, second contrasting episode and rondo theme opening.)
 3. All together, 136 of this movement's 290 measures are taken up by the rondo theme.
 4. We move forward to the fourth and final statement of the rondo theme, in which Beethoven finally does something a little bit different by alternating the theme between the bass and the soprano. The coda grows directly out of the conclusion of the theme. The movement and the sonata conclude with a grace and whimsy that are impossible to describe. Let's hear the final statement of the rondo theme and the coda. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 27 in E Minor, op. 90, movement 2, final rondo theme and coda.)

Lecture Nineteen

The Farewell Sonata

Scope: Beethoven's Piano Sonata no. 26 in Eb Major, op. 81a [*Farewell*], of 1810 is the third and last of the three piano sonatas he composed in 1809 and 1810, including no. 24 in F# Major, op. 78, and no. 25 in G Major, op. 79. Of the three, it is this one, the *Farewell* Sonata, that is the most expressively substantial and technically groundbreaking. The sonata was dedicated to the Austrian Archduke Johann Joseph Rainer Rudolph, a composition student and patron of Beethoven's and a genuine musician. The 20-year-old archduke was fleeing Vienna (hence, the *Farewell* Sonata) in anticipation of an attack by Napoleon's army. In this lecture, we'll look at the piano sonata as a mirror of contemporary politics and events and as program music.

Outline

- I. Beethoven's *Farewell* Sonata is "about" Archduke Rudolph's departure from Vienna on May 4, 1809, in the face of the French invasion; the pain of his absence; and the joy of his return. The three movements of the sonata are entitled "*Das Lebewohl*," ("The Farewell"); "*Abwesenheit*," ("Absence"); and "*Das Wiedersehen*," ("The Return.")
 - A. In terms of the programmatic and emotional content of each movement, Beethoven could not have been more explicit, a fact that has bothered 20th-century musicologists, who can't stand the thought that Beethoven would stoop so low as to compose "descriptive" music.
 - B. The fact is, however, that Beethoven intended the titles of the movements to be taken seriously. Beethoven actually wrote the word *Lebewohl*—"farewell"—directly into the score, with its three syllables separated over the first three notes of the sonata. (**Piano example.**)
 - C. Over the course of the sonata, Beethoven's aggrieved farewell to Archduke Rudolph, his melancholy over the archduke's absence (portrayed in the second movement), and his joy at the archduke's return (portrayed in the third) become generalized and universalized.
 - D. The archduke's departure and return were Beethoven's inspiration, but as always in Beethoven's music, we must make a distinction between the specific biographical event that inspired a piece and the compositional product that is its result. The sonata becomes a metaphor for loss and return, and its substance and complex meanings, ultimately, go far beyond the specifics of its original inspiration.
- II. Our examination of the *Farewell* Sonata will focus on its programmatic elements and how those elements, over the course of the sonata, become generalized and universalized.
 - A. The descending *Lebewohl* motive that begins the first movement introduction is harmonized to sound like a *horn call*, a standard poetic and operatic device of Beethoven's time that was understood to invoke isolation, distance, and memory. (**Piano example.**)
 - B. It is also harmonized to sound as if it is in C minor, not the tonic key of Eb major. If the opening had been harmonized in Eb major, it would have sounded like the following example. (**Piano example.**)
 - C. The movement does appear to begin darkly and bleakly in the key of C minor, a sense that dominates the lengthy and ruminative first movement introduction. As we listen to the introduction, we might ask: if this is a programmatic composition, what is being depicted by this slow introduction? (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 26 in Eb Major, op. 81a [*Farewell*], movement 1, introduction.)
 1. What this passage is depicting is the psychological impact of departure on those left behind. The avoidance of any real resolution to what is ostensibly the tonic Eb major creates a sense of both harmonic and emotional suspension—how will this end? And the short, questioning, upward motives at the conclusion of the introduction would seem to be asking: will he ever return?
 2. This is music of reflection, not music of action; music that describes inner, emotional states, rather than physical action and explicit scenery; programmatically, then, music that is expressionistic, rather than pictorial.
 3. From a motivic point of view, as well as expressively, the introduction—and the sonata form that follows—is all about the *Lebewohl* motive.

4. When we first hear the motive, it is harmonized in C minor. **(Piano example.)**
 5. When we next hear it, halfway through the introduction, it is harmonized as a deceptive cadence, a device Beethoven used to avoid resolution to the tonic Eb major. **(Piano example.)**
 6. The short, questioning, upward motives at the conclusion of the introduction are inversions of the *Lebewohl* motive. **(Piano example.)**
- D.** The exposition—marked “*allegro*”—begins without a pause. Both theme 1 and the modulating bridge that follows are characterized by high energy and a fairly upbeat mood. Having said that, the *Lebewohl* motive is everywhere to be found. Let’s hear theme 1 and the modulating bridge, then we’ll identify some of the *Lebewohl* motives and discuss what this music might “mean,” metaphorically and programmatically, if indeed, it “means” anything at all! **(Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 26 in Eb Major, op. 81a [*Farewell*], movement 1, theme 1 and modulating bridge.)
1. Theme 1 begins with an energized, if not terribly tuneful phrase. **(Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 26 in Eb Major, op. 81a [*Farewell*], movement 1, theme 1, phrase 1.)
 2. That phrase sounds upbeat enough, but let’s take a close look at it. Melodically, the first half of the phrase is an elaboration of the *Lebewohl* motive. **(Piano example.)**
 3. The second half of the phrase consists of two of the inverted, questioning *Lebewohl* motives—“Farewell? Farewell?”—placed back-to-back to create a six-note rising figure. **(Piano example.)**
 4. Meanwhile, the bass is describing a long, mostly chromatic descent, itself a manifestation of the descending *Lebewohl* motive. **(Piano example.)**
 5. Let’s hear the opening phrase again. **(Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 26 in Eb Major, op. 81a [*Farewell*], movement 1, theme 1, phrase 1.)
 6. Programmatically, Beethoven seems to be telling us that beneath the hustle and bustle of everyday life, the memory of the departed is always present, that we must put a good face on the unhappiness of separation. On the other hand, he might be telling us nothing at all; he may merely be using a musical element inspired by Archduke Rudolph’s departure—the *Lebewohl* motive—for a purely musical exploration.
 7. This music can be interpreted as programmatically or non-programmatically as we choose; it’s good and substantial enough to sustain almost any sort of analysis, be it purely musical or entirely programmatic.
 8. Theme 2—initially dissonant and dramatic—is based almost entirely on the inverted, rising, questioning version of the *Lebewohl* motive. **(Piano example. Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 26 in Eb Major, op. 81a [*Farewell*], movement 1, theme 2.)
 9. Likewise, the cadence material is filled with *Lebewohl* motives, over which Beethoven, once again, wrote the word “*Le-be-wohl*” in the score. **(Piano example. Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 26 in Eb Major, op. 81a [*Farewell*], movement 1, cadence material.)
- E.** For a movement that is advertised as being in major, the development section is about as dark and minor-mode-dominated as any we will hear. The essential feature of the development section is the *Lebewohl* motive, now fragmented into two descending notes, rather than three. These sustained, unharmonized, two-note versions of the *Lebewohl* motive alternate with rising motives in the bass. The overall musical and expressive effect is one of hollowness and emptiness, certainly an appropriate expressive response to the farewell on which the movement is based. **(Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 26 in Eb Major, op. 81a [*Farewell*], movement 1, development section and recapitulation, theme 1.)
- F.** The coda concludes with the most explicitly programmatic music in the movement, a passage in which the *Lebewohl* motive appears, initially unharmonized and in imitation. The sense of distance and quiet desolation is in this passage would seem to be a reflection of both the physical distance from the departed archduke and the emotional emptiness caused by that departure.
1. As the coda progresses, *Lebewohl* motives are everywhere to be heard, accompanied by a running eighth-note line.
 2. Finally, the *Lebewohl* motive returns as it was first heard at the beginning of the movement—a gentle horn call, receding into the distance until the final, surprisingly loud cadence. **(Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 26 in Eb Major, op. 81a [*Farewell*], movement 1, coda, conclusion.)

- III. The second movement, entitled by Beethoven “The Absence,” is set in C minor. The composer keeps the movement short and to the point, writing music that is restless, rather than slow and pathetic.
- A. The movement is in no particular form; it consists of a series of discreet musical ideas that describe an ongoing emotional progression: from a sort of pining wistfulness, to affectionate reminiscence, to anger against the current enforced solitude, and so forth. Beethoven indicates in German that the movement be played “with forward motion [meaning not too slowly] and with expression.”
 - B. The constantly shifting musical and expressive content of this second movement imbue it with great melodic and emotional variety at the cost of a single, pervasive thematic or expressive personality. As such, this second movement becomes an *intermezzo*, the necessary “intermediary” step between departure and return, between movements 1 and 3.
 - C. As we listen to the second movement in its entirety, keep in mind the following two points.
 1. As we just noted, this movement lacks a strong thematic personality of its own and, as a result, takes on the character of an *intermezzo*, an “interlude.”
 2. It concludes on an open cadence on the dominant of Eb major, the home key of the third movement. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 26 in Eb Major, op. 81a [*Farewell*], movement 2.)
 - D. Depending on one’s point of view, the last six measures of the second movement are either pure, agonizing pathos or inadvertent comedy. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 26 in Eb Major, op. 81a [*Farewell*], movement 2, transition.)
- IV. The third movement—entitled “The Return”—opens with a joyful, ecstatic, over-the-top bit of introductory music that will test the technique of any pianist, built entirely atop the dominant chord of the home key of Eb major. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 26 in Eb Major, op. 81a [*Farewell*], movement 3, introduction.)
- A. Only with the arrival of theme 1 does the dominant chord of Eb major, which has been sustained from the end of the second movement through the introduction of the third movement, finally resolve.
 - B. Now starts the sonata form proper, and Beethoven has an interesting decision to make. How, exactly, should this movement express the joy of return and reunion? He chooses to do so through dance. Beethoven’s third movement is a *gigue*, a dance of English origin (a jig) that was “civilized” and standardized in France during the Baroque era. It’s a fast, energized dance in compound duple meter. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 26 in Eb Major, op. 81a [*Farewell*], movement 3, exposition.)
 - C. The development section speaks directly to Beethoven’s psychological insight. Rather than continue the fast, loud, and boisterous music of the exposition, the development section is, by comparison, quiet and reflective. Note that usually, a development section offers the most dramatic music in a sonata form movement, but from a dramatic point of view, this development section offers the protagonists a moment to reflect.
 1. The development might be relatively quiet, but harmonically, it’s all over the place. Having ended the exposition in Bb major, Beethoven begins the development by modulating up a half-step, to the key of B major.
 2. The effect, despite the relatively relaxed rhythmic environment, is one of rising harmonic tension as Beethoven moves through some extremely distant keys before getting to get back to Eb major for the recapitulation. Let’s hear the development section, followed by the brilliant and energized version of theme 1 in the recapitulation. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 26 in Eb Major, op. 81a [*Farewell*], movement 3, development section and recapitulation opening.)
 - D. The manic energy of the reunion is rekindled; the recapitulation tears through to the coda, in which theme 1 returns tranquilly and slowly, before the brilliant conclusion to the movement. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 26 in Eb Major, op. 81a [*Farewell*], movement 3, coda.)

Lecture Twenty

Experiments in a Dark Time

Scope: The Piano Sonata no. 28 in A Major, op. 101, was written for and dedicated to Baroness Dorothea von Ertmann. Like the dedication of the *Farewell* Sonata to Archduke Rudolph, the dedication to the baroness was much more than a political formality. It tells us a tremendous amount about the substance and nature of the sonata itself. The baroness was one of Beethoven's piano students and a brilliant musician in her own right. Op. 101 is a piece shaped by Beethoven's feelings for the baroness, as well as what he understood to be her personal tastes and pianistic idiosyncrasies. It is unique among Beethoven's 32 piano sonatas in that he had someone else's hands and spirit in mind—other than his own—when he composed it. As we shall see in this lecture, it is also one of the most rigorous and experimental works Beethoven had composed to that point in his life.

Outline

- I. The Piano Sonata no. 28 in A Major, op. 101 is unlike any other four-movement sonata Beethoven composed.
 - A. The first three movements are extremely brief and so highly contrasted as to make us wonder what they're doing together in the same sonata, but the fourth movement answers that question. The fourth movement—huge and powerful—sums up and ties together everything that came before it. Only after having heard the entire sonata do we realize that the first three movements are, collectively, a preparation for the monumental fourth movement finale.
 - B. We should note that there is a startling resemblance between the Sonata for 'Cello and Piano, op. 102, no. 1 (completed in 1815), and the Piano Sonata, op. 101 (completed in 1816).
 1. Both the Piano Sonata, op. 101 and the 'Cello Sonata, op. 102, no. 1, begin with lyric first movements in compound duple meter; both have a second movement march characterized by dotted rhythms; and both feature a third movement *adagio* that is essentially an introduction to the fourth movement, which in both works, is a big-boned sonata form movement.
 2. Beethoven was experimenting, and it's clear he wanted to try the same formal experiment in two different genres of music. We don't have the time to examine the Sonata for 'Cello and Piano, op. 102, no. 1, back-to-back with the Piano Sonata op. 101, but I urge you to seek out this fantastic piece of music.
- II. The literature refers to the form of this movement as a *highly concentrated sonata form*.
 - A. In reality, the first movement is a perfect example of Beethoven's *contextual use of form*, by which he uses traditional formal structures—in this case, sonata form—only up to the point that they fill his expressive needs.
 1. In the exposition, there is no second theme, no modulating bridge, and no cadence material; just a single, long principal theme that starts in the tonic key of A major and modulates to the dominant key of E major.
 2. This principal theme itself constitutes the entire exposition, and what a theme it is—a long, lush, dreamy, rocking, lullaby-like tune. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 28 in A Major, op. 101, movement 1, exposition.)
 3. Beethoven has created an exposition with two contrasting keys—as we would expect in sonata form—but without contrasting themes. The dramatic anchor of this sonata will be the fourth and final movement—the only movement in which there will be genuine dramatic contrast.
 4. As we've observed, Beethoven wants us to perceive the first three movements as being preludes to the fourth movement. To that end, each of the first three movements will feature a single essential mood. Contrast will occur not so much within the first three movements as between them.
 - B. Although the development section of this first movement does indeed build up to a modest climax, the music never loses its ethereal, dreamlike quality. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 28 in A Major, op. 101, movement 1, development, recapitulation, coda.)

- III. The gentle, song-like dreamscape created by the first movement is swept aside by the sheer physicality of the second movement march.
- A. The movement is a three-part structure: A B A¹. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 28 in A Major, op. 101, movement 2, A.)
 - B. The “contrasting” section (B) is a quasi-canonic episode based on motives drawn from the opening march and yet another classic example of Beethoven making something out of nothing. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 28 in A Major, op. 101, movement 2, B–A¹ opening.)
- IV. The third movement *adagio* is not so much a self-standing movement as a lengthy introduction to the fourth movement finale. We encountered just this sort of slow, introductory middle movement in the *Waldstein* Sonata, in which the second of that sonata’s three movements was essentially an introduction to the last movement.
- A. Beethoven indicates that the movement be played “slowly and longingly.” The opening section combines the block chord–like character of a hymn with the gentle melodic embellishments of the opera house. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 28 in A Major, op. 101, movement 3, opening.)
 - B. Rather than introduce any new thematic or contrasting ideas, the remainder of the movement features a long, descending bass line, over which Beethoven explores the gentle, turn-like embellishment that began the theme. (**Piano example. Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 28 in A Major, op. 101, movement 3, episode.)
 - C. A gentle cadenza follows, based again on the turn-like embellishment that began the movement, and then, in a complete surprise, the cadenza leads directly into a restatement of the opening of the first movement! Marked “*tempo del primo pezzo*”—“the tempo of the first movement”—this brief bit of reminiscence is a masterstroke: it “bookends” the first three movements of the sonata and effectively seals them off from what follows.
 - D. What follows is a seamless transition to the fourth and final movement.
 1. The closing phrase of the first movement quote is heard four times, each time a little faster and a little louder, until a rising series of trills, punctuated by dominant chords of the tonic key of A major, finally leads to the beginning of the fourth movement.
 2. We will hear: the graceful cadenza that concludes the third movement, leading directly to the first movement quotation, which is followed by the trill-dominated transition to the fourth movement and the trilling open cadence on which the transition concludes. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 28 in A Major, op. 101, movement 3, cadenza–transition.)
- V. The fourth movement is a fascinating and monumental hybrid, in which Beethoven combines a Classical-era construct—sonata form—with a Baroque-era construct—a fugue.
- A. This is not a *fugue finale*, like the one we will encounter in Beethoven’s next piano sonata, the *Hammerklavier*, op. 106, in which the entire last movement is a fugue. The finale in op. 101 is a sonata form movement with a fugue for its development section.
 - B. Beethoven tells us that this fourth and final movement should be played “Quickly, but not too quickly, and with determination.” Let’s hear theme 1 and be aware of its two essential motivic elements.
 1. The first element is the motive heard in the following example. (**Piano example.**) This motive is heard in a downward sequence (**Piano example**) and in imitation between the treble and bass of the piano. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 28 in A Major, op. 101, movement 4, theme 1, element 1.)
 2. There’s a sort of mechanical, motoric feel to the opening of this theme, which shouldn’t surprise us if we consider that it was initially conceived as a fugue subject.
 3. The second motivic element of theme 1 is a running sixteenth-note phrase built from the “fast part” of element 1. (**Piano example** and (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 28 in A Major, op. 101, movement 4, theme 1.)
 - C. The modulating bridge is built from the running sixteenth-note element of theme 1. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 28 in A Major, op. 101, movement 4, modulating bridge.)

- D. Theme 2 is a brief, rather inconspicuous tune in dotted rhythms that quickly gives way to cadence material based on theme 1. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 28 in A Major, op. 101, movement 4, theme 2 and cadence material.)
- E. So far, the movement is adhering to sonata form. After the expected exposition repeat, however, we hear the following 10-measure passage, sounding like no development section we've ever heard.
1. Marked *molto tranquillo*—"very tranquilly"—this passage features a motive that had first been heard during the cadence material. (**Piano example.**)
 2. The movement then stops in its tracks. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 28 in A Major, op. 101, movement 4, transition to fugue.)
 3. With our attention thus sharply focused, the fugue begins. The fugue subject is a combination of the opening motive of theme 1 and the cadence material motive that was "highlighted" during the 10-measure passage that followed the exposition. (**Piano example.**)
- F. The fugue/development section is mammoth; written in four voices, it becomes, virtually, a play-within-a-play. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 28 in A Major, op. 101, movement 4, fugue, theme 1, recapitulation, phrase a.)
- G. Does this historical and stylistic hybrid of sonata form and fugue actually "work"?
1. This fugue is not like the short fugal sections of music that Beethoven had plugged into his symphonies, string quartets, and other works before op. 101. No, this is a full-blown fugue coexisting within sonata form, a historical hybrid, and it raises a number of questions about stylistic and expressive meaning.
 2. When Johann Sebastian Bach composed a fugue, the fugue itself was the composition; it was the piece of music. When Beethoven composed a fugue, it was but part of a larger composition: in the case of op. 101, it is the fourth movement development section; in the case of the *Hammerklavier* Sonata, op. 106, it is the entire final movement.
 3. Having said that, fugue was, for the Bach-influenced Beethoven, the highest, purest, most emotionally intense and intellectually powerful genre of music, and his fugues—particularly in his late piano sonatas—became the grand culmination of everything that came before them.
 4. Figuring out how to integrate the monothematic genre of fugue with the multi-thematic structure of sonata form occupied a large portion of Beethoven's creative time during the last decade of his life.
 5. Does this development section-cum-fugue work? You betcha.
- H. The coda of this fourth movement is sensational, and what happens in the bass is so unusual that it begs for an explanation.
1. The coda begins as the fugue did, and for a brief moment, we think that the fugue will re-materialize, but it never does.
 2. Instead, elements of theme 1 quietly flit by; then, just before the movement ends, Beethoven writes a trill deep in the bass of the piano, where it grumbles and complains until the sudden and very loud final cadence. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 28 in A Major, op. 101, movement 4, coda.)
- VI. Beethoven in 1816 was not at his physical or psychological best, and the Piano Sonata no. 28 in A Major, op. 101, remains the only important work he composed between the years 1815 and 1818, between the sonatas for 'Cello and Piano, op. 102, and the *Hammerklavier* Sonata, op. 106.
- A. Beethoven was a crotchety, touchy, irascible man on even his best days, and during the last 11 years of his life (1816–1827), between the ages of 45 and 56, he had very few "best days."
 - B. However, unlike most angry, paranoid, isolated, and lonely people, Beethoven translated his experience into action by composing music that, by some amazing alchemy, universalized his problems and his solutions, music that gives us an opportunity to learn and grow from his experiences and his solutions.
 - C. The stresses and strains of his life caused Beethoven to reinvent himself once again between 1818 and 1820, bringing him into what is now referred to as his *late compositional period*. This is a period of complete compositional transcendence that saw the creation of, among other works, the *Solemn Mass* (the *Missa Solemnis*), the Ninth Symphony, his last six string quartets, the *Diabelli* Variations for Piano, and the last four piano sonatas.
 - D. The Piano Sonata no. 29 in Bb Major, the *Hammerklavier* Sonata of 1818, was the groundbreaking work, the first masterpiece of Beethoven's late period. It is like no other piano sonata composed before or after,

the most virtuosic keyboard music ever written to its time. We will pick up with Beethoven's final "reinvention" and the *Hammerklavier* Sonata in the next lecture.

Lecture Twenty-One

The *Hammerklavier*, Part 1

Scope: Between late 1813 and late 1815, Beethoven experienced a surge of popularity unlike any other in his lifetime. Napoleon’s defeats at Moscow in 1812, at the battle of Vittoria in 1813, and at Waterloo in 1814 unleashed a flood of patriotism and hope in Vienna that found its parallel in Beethoven’s “heroic” music and crusty personal attitude. In late 1813, Beethoven’s music—particularly the recently premiered *Wellington’s Victory* and the Seventh Symphony—became an overnight symbol of Austrian power. Then, in late 1815, Beethoven went from “hot to not.”

The reasons behind Beethoven’s fall from popular grace are many and complex. First, the series of overblown and bombastic works he composed in 1814–1815 to celebrate the fall of Napoleon were used by Beethoven’s critics as evidence that he was “written out.” Beethoven also showed little interest in exploring the emerging musical styles and trends in post-Napoleonic Europe, such as the Italian *bel canto* style and the Neo-Classical Biedermeier style. Further, by 1815, most of Beethoven’s patrons had been lost to him through death, permanent departure from Vienna, or personal estrangement, and his hearing was deteriorating rapidly. Finally, Beethoven’s brother Casper died of tuberculosis in 1815, leading to Beethoven’s brutal and prolonged fight to gain custody of his nephew.

The beginning of Beethoven’s fight coincided with the composition of the Piano Sonata in A Major, op. 101, which was completed in 1816 and which we studied in Lecture Twenty. That sonata was, in many ways, the springboard for the apocalyptic struggle of the *Hammerklavier* Sonata, the piece that Beethoven—and posterity—have recognized as a turning point in his spiritual and compositional life, a turning point equal to that achieved by the *Eroica* Symphony 15 years before.

Outline

- I. Beethoven stopped performing publicly as a pianist in 1814, and by 1818, he was completely deaf in his right ear and able to hear only low-frequency sounds in his left.
 - A. Much has been made of Beethoven’s claim that he could still feel the “vibrations” of the piano through his fingers, and even more has been made about the English Broadwood piano that Beethoven received as a gift from the manufacturer in early 1818, a mammoth instrument said by some to have been his inspiration for the *Hammerklavier* Sonata.
 1. The fact is that by 1818, the pianos Beethoven owned and “played” served little practical purpose in his compositional process, and nowhere is his physical and emotional separation from the pianos of his time more apparent than in the *Hammerklavier* Sonata.
 2. This is not so much a sonata for the pianos Beethoven knew but a mega-sonata for an idealized piano, a piano that was truly an orchestra unto itself.
 - B. In support of that statement, we hear some musical examples.
 1. The first theme of the first movement sonata form is completely orchestral in conception: a magnificent, fanfarish opening phrase spanning virtually the entire keyboard alternates with a quieter, more lyric phrase. In extremes of dynamic contrast, registral range, and sheer grandeur, this music pushes the limits of even a modern piano. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 29 in Bb Major, op. 106 [*Hammerklavier*], movement 1, theme 1.)
 2. The quiet, mysterious trio of the second movement scherzo uses, again, the entire keyboard, all the time, as ringing octaves and a rolling triplet accompaniment alternate between the treble and bass. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 29 in Bb Major, op. 106 [*Hammerklavier*], movement 2, trio.)
 3. The passionate third movement *adagio* is, at 19 minutes, the longest and darkest slow movement Beethoven ever wrote for the piano. There are passages in this movement that are so spread out across the keyboard that they absolutely defy pianistic logic, looking on paper more like an orchestral transcription than piano music. For example, the following excerpt occupies five and a half to six octaves of registral space continuously for more than 1 minute. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 29 in Bb Major, op. 106 [*Hammerklavier*], movement 3.)

II. Why is the sonata called the *Hammerklavier*?

- A. As we observed in Lecture Nineteen, beginning with the *Farewell* Sonata, op. 81a [*Farewell*], Beethoven began using German expressive designations side-by-side with Italian designations. This was partly because Beethoven felt that he could express his intentions more clearly in his native German than by using stock-in-trade Italian terms.
- B. But there was another reason as well, and that had to do with simple chauvinism: Beethoven saw no reason why a native German speaker should have to use, exclusively, Italian terminology. Beethoven's German-language patriotism peaked in 1817, when he sent a letter to the publisher Sigmund Anton Steiner. Framed in a mock-military style, Beethoven wrote: "...hereafter on all our works, in place of 'pianoforte,' *hammerklavier* will be printed" (Thayer/Forbes, 668.)
- C. Beethoven went so far as to attempt to retitl the Piano Sonata in A Major, op. 101, which was already at the printer. Ultimately, the title of op. 101 was not changed, and the designation *Hammerklavier* was saved for Beethoven's next piano sonata, a work in Bb major, completed in 1818. That piece—published as op. 106—was printed in Germany in 1823 under the title: *Grosse Sonate für das Hammerklavier*—"Grand Sonata for the *Hammerklavier*."
- D. Rarely has a title so arbitrarily assigned been more significant and appropriate than in the case of the *Hammerklavier*. *Hammerklavier* Sonata translates, simply, as "piano sonata," as if Beethoven's 28 previous piano sonatas (and, for that matter, the thousands of piano sonatas written before the *Hammerklavier*) were all but a preparation to this colossal piece.
 1. Everything about it is huge: its length, its formal scale, its technical demands, its expressive range. It was considered, at the time it first appeared, to be of nearly insurmountable difficulty, almost unplayable. Like Bach's *Art of the Fugue*, the *Hammerklavier* was, at the time it was composed, perceived as being as much an idealized concept of music as it was a performable piece of music.
 2. Like Beethoven's Third Symphony, composed 15 years before in 1803, it redefined what was considered possible in terms of length, complexity, technical demands, and expressive content in a piano sonata. More than any other single piece, it was the early-19th-century piano composition that raised the technical and expressive bar an order of magnitude and changed the way the musical community "thought" about the piano.

III. Late in his life, the *Hammerklavier* was among a handful of Beethoven's favorite compositions. As we begin to examine this piece, the WordScore Guide™ provided will be especially useful; indeed, the guide is indispensable when attempting to follow the fourth movement fugue.

- A. In the opening notes of the piece, theme 1 is characterized by a series of expanding phrases. The theme opens with an explosion of energy, encompassing over five octaves in the piano, as a magnificent, orchestrally conceived fanfare pounds away on the tonic Bb major chord. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 29 in Bb Major, op. 106, [*Hammerklavier*], movement 1, theme 1, phrase a.)
 1. This "fanfare" is as much a rhythm as it is a melody. Immediately following the first fanfare, a second fanfare—phrase a¹—is heard three notes higher, expanding the theme outward. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 29 in Bb Major, op. 106, [*Hammerklavier*], movement 1, theme 1, a¹.)
 2. A lyric phrase—phrase b—follows that is itself an expansion of the opening fanfare. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 29 in Bb Major, op. 106 [*Hammerklavier*], movement 1, theme 1, b.)
 3. This is followed by a second, longer lyric phrase that moves upward even as the bass descends nearly four octaves. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 29 in Bb Major, op. 106, [*Hammerklavier*], movement 1, theme 1, b¹.)
 4. A third thematic phrase—c— follows, a phrase that combines elements of both phrases a and b and is heard over a tonic Bb pedal in the bass. This phrase comes to a pause on an open cadence after a huge descent and ascent that, again, spans the length of the piano. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 29 in Bb Major, op. 106 [*Hammerklavier*], movement 1, theme 1, c.)
 5. Finally, two last fanfares bring this first theme to its conclusion. The second of these closing fanfares suddenly and shockingly lands on a D chord, the dominant chord of the distant key of G major, which is located a third away from the tonic Bb major. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 29 in Bb Major, op. 106, [*Hammerklavier*], movement 1, theme 1, c.)

6. Let's hear this first theme in its entirety; then we'll talk about it a bit more. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 29 in Bb Major, op. 106 [*Hammerklavier*], movement 1, theme 1.)
 7. The two keys to this theme are also the keys to the entire sonata.
 8. The first of these keys is *expansion*. Each phrase of this theme marks an expansion of the previous phrase, a process we will witness on both small and large scale throughout the *Hammerklavier*.
 9. The second key to the *Hammerklavier* has to do with the nature of its melodic and harmonic movement: themes and harmonic areas will exhibit movement by thirds.
 10. By way of demonstration, the opening phrase (a) outlines the distance of three notes, called the *interval* of a third. (**Piano example.**)
 11. The following phrase (a¹) expands the range of the theme upward, while continuing to outline a third. (**Piano example.**)
 12. The lyric phrase that follows (b) is a further expansion of phrases a and a¹; we hear, first, phrases a and a¹, followed by phrase b. (**Piano examples.**)
 13. Like phrases a and a¹, phrase b continues to focus on the interval of a third, consisting of a series of interlocking thirds. (**Piano example.**)
 14. Phrase b¹ then expands on phrase b, phrase c expands on phrase b¹, and everything keeps expanding until that shocking moment when the harmony pivots from a Bb major chord to a D major chord. (**Piano example.**)
 15. Bb major and D major are distantly related harmonies a third apart, key areas that just happen to harmonize the first two pitches of the first theme, which were a Bb and a D. (**Piano example.**)
- B.** The modulating bridge consists of two parts. In the first part, a D dominant chord—the dominant chord of the key of G major—expands outward across the entire length of the keyboard. The second part sees a gentle, running figure in two-part imitative polyphony calm and smooth the texture and mood as it merges seamlessly with theme 2. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 29 in Bb Major, op. 106 [*Hammerklavier*], movement 1, modulating bridge.)
- C.** Theme 2 is in G major—a key a third away from the tonic Bb major. The theme—lyric, gentle, and first heard in the bass—is a free inversion of theme 1, phrase b. In the following examples, we hear theme 1, phrase b; theme 1, phrase b, inverted; and theme 2. We then hear theme 2 in its entirety. (**Piano examples.** **Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 29 in Bb Major, op. 106, [*Hammerklavier*], movement 1, theme 2.)
- D.** The cadence material that follows is in two parts. In part 1, a sweet, singing, minor-tinted cadence theme (built from thirds!) is heard over a rolling accompaniment. In part 2, the fanfare mood of the opening returns. The exposition concludes with three rising octaves that move the distance of a third—G–A–Bb—and push the music back to the key of Bb major for the exposition repeat. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 29 in Bb Major, op. 106 [*Hammerklavier*], movement 1, cadence material.)
- E.** We're now back in Bb major, with no modulatory formula or chord progression to move the harmony from G major back to Bb major, not even a dominant-to-tonic cadence to Bb major.
1. Beethoven assumes that we have become accustomed to melodic and harmonic motion by thirds and another key change via an ascending third won't seem out of place.
 2. This sort of harmonic sleight-of-hand becomes an essential element of the development section. The development also introduces the concept of *fugue*, a concept that Beethoven will run with in the fourth and final movement of the sonata.
- F.** The development section falls into six parts. Parts 1 and 2 together act as an introduction for the mini-fugue, or *fugato*, that is part 3. The subject of this *fugato* is based on the fanfare melody, that is, phrase a of theme 1. We first hear that phrase, followed by parts 1–3 of the development section. (**Piano example.** **Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 29 in Bb Major, op. 106 [*Hammerklavier*], movement 1, development, parts 1–3.)
1. In part 4 of the development section, a sequence of falling motives based on the fanfare motive of theme 1 builds to a huge and dramatic climax, *fortissimo*! Octave Ds dissipate the energy and slow the momentum. (**Piano example.**)
 2. It would seem that the harmony is headed for a resolution to either G major or G minor, as we hear in the first piano example, but that's not what happens. Instead, the repeated Ds move up a half-step to D#, as in the second example. (**Piano examples.**)

3. Just like that, we hear the cadence theme in the key of B major, a third away from the expected key of G! Let's hear parts 4 and 5 of the development section. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 29 in Bb Major, op. 106 [*Hammerklavier*], movement 1, development, parts 4–5.)
 4. The last part of the development section sees the fanfare motive of theme 1 return in an imitative passage. Eventually, the motive is fragmented and broken down until all that's left are two rising notes, imitated back and forth. At the last moment, Beethoven pivots out of the distant key of B major by enharmonically reinterpreting an A# as a Bb, then pivots back to Bb major for the start of the recapitulation. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 29 in Bb Major, op. 106 [*Hammerklavier*], movement 1, development, part 6, and recapitulation, theme 1 opening.)
- G.** Before we hear the coda and discuss just a few of the stamina issues that conclude this first movement, we must talk about the speed—the tempo—at which Beethoven claimed this movement should be played.
1. Beethoven provides a metronome mark indicating that the movement should be played at half note = 138, meaning that the music should go by at a speed of 138 half notes per minute. (**Metronome demonstration.**)
 2. Claude Franck plays the movement a good bit slower, though at a still bracing tempo of half note = 112, that is, at a speed of 112 half notes per minute. (**Metronome demonstration. Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 29 in Bb Major, op. 106 [*Hammerklavier*], movement 1, theme 1, phrase 1.)
 3. Many musical scholars have weighed in on the subject of Beethoven's tempo marking at the conclusion of this movement, some asserting that it was added by Beethoven's student and editor, Carl Czerny, not the composer himself. I would tend to agree that we must take the metronome mark with a grain of salt, remembering that, for Beethoven, the *Hammerklavier* represents a pianistic ideal.
 4. It is the cadence material in the recapitulation and the coda, particularly the trills, that leave even the best pianists begging for mercy. The trills, back-and-forth alternations of pitches, sound innocent enough, as we hear in the following example, but they are played at breakneck speed. (**Piano example.**)
 5. A trill is the only way a piano can sustain a series of pitches at a uniform dynamic level for any appreciable length of time, something that the instruments of the orchestra, particularly the strings, can do without a moment's pause. In the *Hammerklavier*, Beethoven wants the piano to be an orchestra, and the trills are an essential component in that orchestral conception. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 29 in Bb Major, op. 106 [*Hammerklavier*], movement 1, cadence material and coda.)

Lecture Twenty-Two

The *Hammerklavier*, Part 2

Scope: In this lecture, we continue our examination of the magnificent, wonderful, and completely unpredictable *Hammerklavier* Sonata. We focus particularly on the paradoxical fourth movement fugue; paradoxical because this fugue—that seemingly most organized, most intellectualized, most systematized, and most objective of Baroque-era constructs—becomes here a vehicle for the most abstract and extreme expressive content. The *Hammerklavier* Sonata has been called “monstrous and immeasurable,” a piano sonata like no other. With it, Beethoven opened a door to a new expressive world.

Outline

- I. The second movement scherzo of the *Hammerklavier* features a compact, four-note, dotted-rhythm motive that rises and falls a third and grows directly out of the fanfare motive of the first movement.
 - A. By way of comparison, we hear the first movement opening, followed by the scherzo opening. (**Piano example.**) We then hear the entire scherzo, set in the key of Bb major and in triple meter. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 29 in Bb Major, *Hammerklavier*, op. 106, movement 2, scherzo.)
 - B. Like the scherzo, the trio begins with a rising/falling interval of a third. (**Piano example. Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 29 in Bb Major, *Hammerklavier*, op. 106, movement 2, trio.)
 - C. Following the trio, Beethoven does something completely unexpected. Rather than return to the scherzo, he moves on to what amounts to a second trio which opens with a varied version of the rising/falling, four-note scherzo motive.
 1. As a reminder, we hear the scherzo opening in the first example, followed by the opening of the second trio. (**Piano examples.**)
 2. As this odd passage nears its conclusion, this second trio sinks to the bottom of the piano, then sweeps upward seven octaves to an open cadence and a pause. A strange tremolo on the dominant harmony attempts to reestablish triple meter. Silence follows, then the scherzo returns. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 29 in Bb Major, op. 106 [*Hammerklavier*], movement 2, second trio and scherzo da capo.)
 3. The strangeness continues. Beethoven concludes the scherzo da capo with a closed cadence in the tonic Bb major and two octave Bbs, as we hear in the first example, but then B naturals and Bbs alternate back and forth in a kind of competition. (**Piano examples.**)
 4. Ultimately, it sounds as if the B naturals have “won,” and we’re in B minor! This series of octave B naturals is followed by a panicked *presto*, then the B naturals resolve downward to Bb, and the scherzo resumes for the briefest four measures and ends, with infinite delicacy, in Bb major. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 29 in Bb Major, op. 106 [*Hammerklavier*], movement 2, coda.)
- II. The third movement *adagio* in F# minor is the longest slow movement Beethoven ever composed for the piano. It is orchestral in its huge block chords and registral span and operatic in its long and highly embellished melodic passages.
 - A. Theme 1 is somber and soulful and accompanied, almost hymn-like, by huge, *block* harmonies. These block harmonies demand maximum sonority from the piano, and they are a perfect example of the sort of writing that seems much more suited to a modern grand piano than the smaller, less resonant pianos of Beethoven’s time. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 29 in Bb Major, op. 106 [*Hammerklavier*], movement 3, theme 1.)
 - B. As the sonata was on the press, Beethoven tried to stop production so that one additional measure containing all of two pitches could be tacked on to the beginning of this third movement.
 1. Why did Beethoven add a measure to the movement and why does it work so well?
 2. In its original form, the third movement began as in the following example. (**Piano example.**) We next hear the two notes that Beethoven added and the resulting opening phrase. (**Piano examples.**)

3. Beethoven insisted that the new measure was necessary because he wanted to “echo the conclusion of the scherzo.” In doing so, he also created a connection between the openings of the first three movements!
 4. With the added new measure, the third movement begins with a rising and falling interval of a third, as in the following example. (**Piano example.**)
 5. Movement 2—the scherzo—ends exactly as it began, with the motive heard in the following example, a rising and falling interval of a third. (**Piano example.**)
 6. Of course, the sonata began with a fanfare motive that itself outlined a rising and falling interval of a third. (**Piano example.**)
- C. We move forward to the end of this third movement *adagio*, to part 5 of the coda, during which we hear one final statement of the opening of theme 1. This final thematic statement begins in the tonic key of F# minor but magically shifts to F# major for the conclusion of the movement. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 29 in Bb Major, op. 106 [*Hammerklavier*], movement 3, conclusion.)
1. Aside from the sense of relief created by the shift to F# major, be aware of the bass note—a tonic F#. (**Piano example.**) What’s so special about this low F#?
 2. The fourth and final movement will begin with a series of F naturals that will climb from the bottom to the top of the keyboard. Just as at the conclusion of the second movement, when the pitch B natural resolved downward a half-step to the pitch Bb, so the low F# at the conclusion of the third movement resolves downward a half-step to the F natural at the beginning of the fourth movement.
 3. This downwards motion creates a sense of arrival, a feeling that we are where we belong. Let’s listen to the end of the third movement and the beginning of the fourth. (**Piano example.**)
- III. With that repeated F, we are knocking at the door of the fourth movement fugue, the single most astonishing movement of music Beethoven ever composed for the piano.
- A. Late in life, Beethoven had found a kindred spirit in Johann Sebastian Bach, a composer whose profundity of utterance and magnificence of expression was equaled by his compositional virtuosity: never a wasted note, nothing done for mere prettiness or effect.
1. By 1818, Beethoven’s deafness, his alienation, his bull-headedness, and his transcendental compositional skills and imagination had, to his way of thinking, liberated him entirely from the necessity of writing anything other than what he wanted to write..
 2. “Without limits or limitations” would be a perfect subtitle for the Bach-inspired fourth movement fugue of the *Hammerklavier*.
- B. In his “introduction,” Beethoven creates a “context” for the massive fugue that follows.
1. Part 1 of the introduction is marked “*largo*,” “very slowly.” A series of rising F naturals spans the length of the piano, covering six octaves in all. F natural is the dominant pitch of the sonata’s home key of Bb major. Slowly, more pitches are added to the upper part while the bass line descends in thirds: F–Db–Bb–Gb–Eb–Cb. It’s as if Beethoven is creating a universe of pitch from scratch, expanding outward from the “singularity” of F natural. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 29 in Bb Major, op. 106 [*Hammerklavier*], movement 4, introduction, part 1.)
 2. Part 2 of the introduction is marked *un poco più vivace*, “a little more lively.” The essentially chordal character of part 1 gives way to the essentially linear character of part 2, as two B major scales—mostly in contrary motion—announce “the birth of counterpoint” before collapsing into a B major chord. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 29 in Bb Major, op. 106 [*Hammerklavier*], movement 4, introduction, part 2.)
 3. Part 3 of the introduction is marked “*allegro*.” A forceful bit of two-, then three-, then four-part polyphony is heard before being brought up short by a G# minor chord and a bass line descending by thirds: G#–E–C#–A. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 29 in Bb Major, op. 106 [*Hammerklavier*], movement 4, introduction, part 3.)
 4. In part 4, a series of rising octave As mirrors the rising Fs that began the introduction. A gently falling line and a series of trills are followed, in the bass, by another series of descending thirds, which drives the music to part 5 of the introduction.
 5. Marked “*prestissimo*”—“very fast”—part 5 begins with a widely spaced A major tremolo, *fortissimo*. The tremolo slows, quiets, and thins out, leaving only the pitch A in both top and bottom, and the bass drops yet another third, down to an F natural, the dominant pitch of the home key of Bb major.

- (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 29 in Bb Major, op. 106 [*Hammerklavier*], movement 4, introduction, parts 4 and 5.)
6. For all its striking “individual moments,” this introduction appears disjointed, even random; weirder, even, than the second movement scherzo. Beethoven must do a number of things with this introduction, and he accomplishes his various missions beautifully.
 7. First, he wants to physically set the fugue apart from the rest of the sonata; he wants to set the fugue apart even from the concept of *sonata*. To do that, he must create, first, a transitive, twilight state, during which the first three movements are left in the distance.
 8. Second, over the course of this introduction, Beethoven has been careful not to introduce melodic or rhythmic elements that themselves might be construed as thematic but, rather, focus on the “essence” of what has been and what is to come: namely, harmonic and melodic motion by thirds.
 9. Beethoven’s introduction transits through an unfamiliar landscape to a new place, and if it seems “unfocused,” it’s because the great moment of focus is being saved for the arrival, finally, of the tonic Bb major and the fugue subject.
- C. With the fugue introduction the introduction proper is over. The dominant harmony of Bb is sustained for four measures in a series of trills and scales that will become part of the fugue subject. The long-awaited resolution to Bb major finally occurs, paving the way for the appearance of the fugue subject. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 29 in Bb Major, op. 106 [*Hammerklavier*], movement 4, fugue introduction.)
- IV. The fugue subject is long, and its length guarantees that the process of “working it out” over the course of the fugue will be equally long.
- A. It begins with a huge, upward leap of 10 notes (an octave and a third), from an F to a trilling A. This upward leap parallels the one that initiated the first movement of the sonata. (**Piano examples.**)
 - B. A blazing nine measures of scales and passagework that is the fugue subject follows, all of it based on a chain of descending thirds. Let’s hear the entire exposition. The fugue subject appears first in the alto (that is, the middle) voice, then in the soprano voice, and finally, in the bass voice. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 29 in Bb Major, op. 106 [*Hammerklavier*], movement 4, exposition.)
 - C. A series of modulatory episodes and subject restatements follows. The episodes are like miniature development sections, in which some aspect or aspects of the exposition are fragmented and sequenced.
 1. During the subject restatements, the subject, which in the exposition started on beat 1, is displaced to various other beats, creating a seamless flow of continuous counterpoint that wipes out any perception of “bar line.”
 2. A brief interlude follows the third episode, during which an entirely new passage serves to punctuate the fugue and introduce what comes next. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 29 in Bb Major, op. 106 [*Hammerklavier*], movement 4, ms. 31–83.)
 - D. The next restatement, in the alto, is in augmentation, meaning that the note values of the subject will be twice as long as before.
 1. This restatement is immediately followed by another in which Beethoven constructs a *stretto*—that is, a canon in which successive entries move closer and closer together. The *stretto* is constructed by augmentation and inversion, in which the subject in the soprano overlaps with the subject in inversion in the bass, with both parts being augmented!
 2. The passage dissolves into a series of trills heard everywhere on the keyboard. Slowly, the drama and momentum dissipate; the harmony settles on an Eb chord, the dominant of Ab major; the music quiets, and we hear an extended version of the interlude that ended our last excerpt.
 3. We now hear the subject restatement in augmentation, the subject *stretto* by augmentation and inversion, and the extended interlude. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 29 in Bb Major, op. 106 [*Hammerklavier*], movement 4, ms. 84–142.)
 - E. The first time we heard the interlude, it introduced the restatements in augmentation. This last interlude introduces something rather more spectacular, an entirely new exposition, in which the original subject is stated backwards—in retrograde, a so-called *cancrizans*, meaning, literally, a “walking backward like a crab” passage! (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 29 in Bb Major, op. 106 [*Hammerklavier*], movement 4, ms. 143–197.)

- F. What amounts to a third exposition now follows, in which Beethoven inverts the subject, then showcases this version of the subject, followed by a climactic episode that concludes with an open cadence and a pause. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 29 in Bb Major, op. 106 [*Hammerklavier*], movement 4, ms. 198–239.)
- G. This is a fugue about fugues. It is an extrapolation of Johann Sebastian Bach’s belief that music was a tool of God’s will and that the creation of music of great technical and intellectual complexity was both a profoundly spiritual act and an affirmation of God’s order beneath the chaos. Beethoven’s monumental fugue is about nothing less than the beauty, the complexity, and ultimately, the underlying order of God’s cosmos. Beethoven has created, literally, a universe of pitch and rhythm, in which methodology is both the means and the end. No matter how much or how little of this world we can technically perceive, we are in awe of the universe of sound this fugue creates.
- H. What happens next transcends everything that has come before it. An entirely new subject is introduced in its own *exposition*, followed by what amounts to a development section. It is a gentle, profoundly peaceful theme, the human voice in this bewildering and magnificent universe of counterpoint. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 29 in Bb Major, op. 106 [*Hammerklavier*], movement 4, ms. 240–269.)
- I. Both fugue subjects now return, simultaneously, in a long restatement.
1. This is followed by a *stretto* so complex that any attempt to verbally describe it must fail (refer to Donald Tovey’s description reproduced in the WordScore).
 2. A brief episode follows the *stretto*, which itself is followed by the grand summation—a climactic “review”—of almost every contrapuntal device that has been used to this point of the fugue.
 3. This, in turn, is followed by a final restatement of the original fugue subject in the soprano and a closed cadence. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 29 in Bb Major, op. 106 [*Hammerklavier*], movement 4, ms. 269–357.)
- J. The coda—in five parts—is based on the opening leap and trill that began the original fugue subject. The movement ends as a rising series of trills and leaps climbs the keyboard, arriving finally on a Bb major chord. Two last chords—a dominant and tonic—are labeled *largamente*, meaning “big,” as if everything in this movement wasn’t already gigantic! (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 29 in Bb Major, op. 106 [*Hammerklavier*], movement 4, ms. 358–end.)

Lecture Twenty-Three

In a World of His Own

Scope: As a rule, Beethoven preferred to write pieces in the chamber and solo genres in groups of three. This way he could create large-scale contrast, not just among themes or even movements, but between entire works. As we've seen, much of Beethoven's music is about the resolution demanded by contrast (or conflict)—that is, coming to grips with extreme emotional and spiritual states. Paradoxically, one reason that Beethoven's last three piano sonatas are so different from each other has to do with the fact that they were conceived as a trilogy, and in them, Beethoven wanted to create works of maximum contrast. The three sonatas ops. 109, 110, and 111 were composed in the period 1820–1822, at the same time that Beethoven was working on the epic *Missa Solemnis*—the *Solemn Mass*, op. 123. The expressive, spiritual, and compositional links between the *Missa Solemnis* and the trilogy of sonatas ops. 109, 110, and 111 are clear.

Outline

- I. The Piano Sonata no. 30 in E Major, op. 109, is dedicated to Maximiliana Brentano, daughter of Antonie Brentano, the woman now generally believed to have been Beethoven's "Immortal Beloved."
 - A. The first movement of op. 109 evokes a sense of gentle nostalgia—even longing—but not at the very beginning, which is lean and energized in its mood. Like the Sonata in G Major, op. 14, no. 2, composed in 1799, op. 109 “emerges from the void” in a series of single notes; there are no chords, and our sense of key and harmony are the result of the cumulative effect of these single notes. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 30 in E Major, op. 109, movement 1, ms. 1–9.)
 - B. Just as the sonata seems to be getting off the ground, this youthful, energized music in duple meter stops and gives way to a passage in triple meter marked *adagio espressivo*, “slowly and expressively.” (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 30 in E Major, op. 109, movement 1, ms. 10–17.)
 1. This is music of extraordinary pathos: lyric, bittersweet, passionate, and nostalgic. It is also music that stands in extreme contrast with the lean and energized opening, and that's exactly what this first movement is about: contrast, which becomes conflict, which in this movement, remains unresolved.
 2. In this first movement of op. 109, two utterly different musical entities alternate but do not interact. Such an idiosyncratic movement could be interpreted as a portrait of an individual at two different times in his life, trying vainly to reconcile himself to himself.
 - C. The expressive duality that characterized the first movement is nowhere to be found in the second movement. Although organized as a sonata form, the overwhelmingly dark tone of the second movement and its non-stop rhythmic momentum express a single mood, inspiring one writer to describe it as a “lunacy-provoking tarantella.”
 1. Typical of much of Beethoven's late music, the lack of strong cadential articulation and the polyphony imbue the movement with an astonishing singularity of purpose and expression.
 2. Furthermore, while it's a very “modern” composition for the year 1820, in its economy of material and formal concentration, it sounds like a high-octane version of a Baroque composition. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 30 in E Major, op. 109, movement 2.)
 - D. If the first movement is “about” the contrast between youth and age and the second is “about” dance, then the third movement theme with six variations is about song.
 1. The expressive weight of the entire sonata rests on this last movement.
 2. The theme itself is a genuine aria, music of reflection and maturity, a theme that looks back rather wistfully at the music of the first two movements and puts those movements into a certain perspective. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 30 in E Major, op. 109, movement 3, theme.)
 3. The first variation “liberates” the theme from its almost hymn-like accompaniment and has an unearthly lightness and grace. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 30 in E Major, op. 109, movement 3, variation 1.)
 4. The second variation breaks the theme into two-note units that are reminiscent of the youthful and energized music of the first movement. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 30 in E Major, op. 109, movement 3, variation 2.)

5. The wickedly fast tempo and contrapuntal brilliance of the third variation recalls the second movement “tarantella.” (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 30 in E Major, op. 109, movement 3, variation 3.)
 6. Clearly, these variations do not just vary the theme; they’re also a commentary on the musical content and expressive substance of the first two movements.
 7. In variation 6, the emotional storm—kept in check throughout this long and overwhelmingly meditative movement—finally breaks.
 8. Beethoven begins the variation simply, accompanying the theme in quarter notes. (**Vocal demonstration.**) Then the accompaniment begins to speed up, first to eighth notes, then eighth-note triplets, then sixteenth-note sextuplets, then thirty-second notes that finally become trills. (**Vocal demonstration.**)
 9. Loud, violent trills continue for the remainder of the variation, as the theme attempts to “ride the waves” of this tempest. The music quiets, the trills end, and the coda—consisting of the theme as originally heard but without its repetitions—begins.
 10. By returning to the song, the source of the movement, the sense of reflection that pervaded the beginning of the movement is magnified a hundredfold. This movement—which in variations 1 and 2 reflected and commented on movements 1 and 2—is now reflecting back on itself as well. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 30 in E Major, op. 109, movement 3, variation 6 and coda.)
- II.** Rarely in the span of three movements will we hear music of greater contrast than in the Piano Sonata no. 31 in Ab Major, op. 110 of 1821.
- A. In the first movement of op. 110, the first part of theme 1 begins with a quiet, lyric phrase that ends with a gentle trill. The second part consists of a broad, arching melody heard over a steady sixteenth-note accompaniment. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 31 in Ab Major, op. 110, movement 1, theme 1.)
 - B. The modulating bridge is, in terms of its length and substance, a genuine development section. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 31 in Ab Major, op. 110, movement 1, modulating bridge.)
 - C. Theme 2 is a brief but passionate tune consisting of tightly wound ascending motives followed by gentle descents. (**Piano example.**) What gives this second theme its dramatic kick is the descending bass line in the accompaniment, itself a continuation of the descending trills that concluded the modulating bridge. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 31 in Ab Major, op. 110, movement 1, theme 2 and cadence material.)
 - D. Increasingly in his late music, Beethoven downplays the joints between sections, moving from one large section to the next without strongly marked cadences or pauses to set them apart. This downplaying of formal division is an essential aspect of Beethoven’s late music, as he sought ever more plasticity, flexibility, and continuity in his approach to musical form.
 - E. The second movement scherzo, in F minor, for all its energy, momentum, and expressive bluster, exhibits a range of dynamics, tempo changes, syncopations, silences, whimsicality, and otherwise completely unexpected events that make it an entirely different musical animal than the scherzi of Beethoven’s middle, or “heroic,” period. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 31 in Ab Major, op. 110, movement 2, scherzo.)
 - F. The trio is spectacular and spectacularly difficult to play! Rapid, descending lines in the right hand are heard against rising notes in the left, with each phrase punctuated by ringing notes at the very top of the piano. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 31 in Ab Major, op. 110, movement 2, trio and scherzo da capo.)
 - G. Without warning, the sonata turns in a new direction. The third and final movement begins with what Beethoven marks as an *adagio* and *recitativo*—an *adagio* introduction in Bb minor, followed by the sort of quasi-operatic recitative we would expect to hear in a *Passion* by Bach or, indeed, a *Solemn Mass* by Beethoven. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 31 in Ab Major, op. 110, movement 3, *adagio* and recitative.)
 1. This remarkable introductory music leads to a lengthy passage in Ab minor that Beethoven marks “*Klagender Gesang*”—a “song of lamentation.” (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 31 in Ab Major, op. 110, movement 3, *Klagender Gesang*, opening.)
 2. Out of the deathly pall cast by this song of lamentation, there slowly emerges a spacious, leaping fugue in Ab major, its subject derived from the first theme of the first movement. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 31 in Ab Major, op. 110, movement 3, fugue 1 opening.)

3. This fugue is followed by another sorrowful adagio, which is followed by yet another fugue, this second one an inversion of the first! The movement ends, with a sort of terrible, minor-tinted brilliance, in the key of Ab major. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 31 in Ab Major, op. 110, movement 3, conclusion.)

III. It is impossible to believe that this movement, with its gorgeous and pathetic recitative, the song of lamentation that alternates with the blistering and dramatic fugue, and the brilliant and terrifying conclusion that follows is not a reference to Christ's suffering and death on the cross, which Beethoven had just depicted in the *Crucifixus* section of his *Missa Solemnis*.

- A. That Beethoven would conclude a piano sonata that began so esoterically in its first movement with such a dramatically inspired third movement struck many of his contemporaries as irrational, but there's nothing irrational about it. By 1821, Beethoven's spiritual life coexisted entirely with his terrestrial life; crises of faith and spirit were intertwined and inseparable from the crises of his everyday life.
- B. That he chose to write a mini-religious drama rather than a rondo or sonata form finale for op. 110 is simply a testament to his vision of the nature of musical expression and his Bach-derived conviction—expressed repeatedly in his late music—that the act of making music was, in itself, a profoundly spiritual pursuit.

Lecture Twenty-Four

Reconciliation

Scope: Beethoven completed his final piano sonata (op. 111) in January of 1822, five years before his death in March of 1827. It appears that he fully intended op. 111 to be his last piano sonata. By the early 1820s, Beethoven was complaining that the piano was “too limited” for his imagination and that he wanted to concentrate on “other” projects; indeed, op. 111 would seem to be his “valedictory statement” in the genre of piano sonata. It ties up loose ends that had been issues in his piano music for decades, yet is so stunningly original that it caps, rather than continues, his run of 32 sonatas for piano.

Outline

- I. The first question we must ask regarding op. 111 is: why does the sonata have only two movements, an *allegro* followed by an *adagio*?
 - A. Beethoven had written two-movement sonatas before: the two “easy” sonatas of op. 49 and, more recently, the Piano Sonatas ops. 54, 78, and 90. But the scale of these sonatas was modest, and they didn’t require a third movement to “balance” their structures, the sort of third movement that, on its surface, op. 111 seems to beg for.
 - B. Certainly, Beethoven’s contemporaries didn’t know the answer to this question. The fact is, there’s not a single surviving note in any of Beethoven’s sketchbooks that would suggest he intended to compose a third movement for op. 111.
- II. In the first movement of op. 111, Beethoven reconciles the two competing artistic impulses he carried within himself: his Classical-era inheritance and his Johann Sebastian Bach, Baroque-era–inspired spiritual soul. What Beethoven does in this first movement is completely integrate fugue and sonata form.
 - A. The first movement begins with a jagged and dissonant introduction that functions as an image of chaos before the creation. It ends on an open cadence and a long, rumbling trill in the lowest reaches of the piano. Suddenly, this “drum-roll trill” gets faster and louder! (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 32 in C Minor, op. 111, movement 1, introduction.)
 - B. Theme 1 is an explosion based on a vicious three-note motive. (**Piano example.**) Theme 1 is also a fugue subject, presented in octaves in both hands. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 32 in C Minor, op. 111, movement 1, theme 1/subject.)
 - C. In place of a standard first theme and modulating bridge, we get, instead, a fugue—of sorts.
 1. The exposition, beginning with the statement of the fugue subject that we just heard, is in C minor. The first episode modulates to Eb major, where we hear the fugue subject restated.
 2. A second episode—in place of the modulating bridge—modulates away, then back to Eb major in preparation for theme 2. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 32 in C Minor, op. 111, movement 1, theme 1/subject.)
 - D. Theme 2 is a much more familiar sounding “thematic” construct—a graceful, lyric tune characterized by dotted rhythms and some elaborate ornamentation, ending with two chords marked *adagio*, “slowly.” (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 32 in C Minor, op. 111, movement 1, theme 2.)
 - E. An avalanche of descending, broken thirds initiates the cadence material, which has the furious, contrapuntal character of theme 1. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 32 in C Minor, op. 111, movement 1, cadence material.)
 - F. The development section begins with a quick shift of key to G minor, and from there it’s another fugue.
 1. This “developmental” fugue is based on a subject with the same head but a different tail than the one we heard in the exposition. In the following examples, we hear, first, the exposition fugue subject, followed by the development-section fugue subject. (**Piano examples.**)
 2. We hear the development section, starting with the very last notes of the exposition, through the beginning of theme 1 in the recapitulation. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 32 in C Minor, op. 111, movement 1, development section and recapitulation, theme 1, opening.)

- G.** The fugue that is theme 1 ends, and the modulating bridge goes into high gear, with Beethoven substituting octaves for what had been, in the exposition, single notes. In the recapitulation, theme 2 is somewhat extended: heard first in C major, then in C minor. The cadence material and the brief coda that follows continue to feature fugue-like material to the very end of the movement, which concludes in C major. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 32 in C Minor, op. 111, movement 1, recapitulation and coda.)
- H.** In four of his last five piano sonatas, Beethoven grappled with the issue of how to incorporate the ancient procedure of fugue into his self-avowedly modern sonatas.
1. In the Sonata in A major, op. 101, of 1816, Beethoven did something that both Haydn and Mozart had done—he “inserted” a fugue into the fourth movement development section.
 2. In the *Hammerklavier* of 1818, Beethoven took it a step further, and dedicated his entire last movement to fugue.
 3. In the Sonata in Ab Major, op. 110, of 1821, Beethoven alternated fugal and non-fugal elements in the third and final movement.
 4. Finally, here in the first movement of op. 111, Beethoven achieves total synthesis between fugue and sonata form. There’s nothing else like it in the repertoire.
- III.** As he did in the Piano Sonata in E Major, op. 109, Beethoven concludes op. 111 with a theme and variations movement.
- A.** A schematic description of the movement sounds simple enough: a theme (one that Beethoven calls an *arietta*, meaning “little song”) is followed by four variations, a modulatory episode, a fifth variation, and a coda.
1. But, at 18 minutes in length, this monumental movement takes us to a place far beyond anything we would expect from something called “theme and variations form.”
 2. This is a place from which there is no return. This second movement is, without a doubt, a long, slow finale.
- B.** The *arietta* is one of those Beethovenian miracles of directness and simplicity. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 32 in C Minor, op. 111, movement 2, theme.)
1. Yet “simple”-sounding though it is, there’s a nobility, a grace, and a serenity to this theme that defies description. Only the greatest artists can do what Beethoven has done: strip his language down to its barest essentials and, in doing so, release its full expressive potential. In such an environment, the commonplace becomes extraordinary; the obvious, transcendental; directness becomes provocative; and the simplest ideas become elegance personified.
 2. Beethoven’s ability to transform and elevate the simplest musical materials resonates with us at an elemental level. Over and over again, we are witness in Beethoven’s music to a process of evolution that transforms the simplest elements of life and experience into things magnificent, unimaginable, and timeless.
- C.** Each of the four variations is faster than the previous one. Each variation breaks the basic beat into smaller and faster subdivisions.
1. We were witness to the same process in the sixth and final variation in the third movement of op. 109, in which the accompaniment sped up, from quarter to eighth notes to eighth-note triplets to sixteenth-note sextuplets to thirty-second notes that finally became trills, while the basic tempo remained the same.
 2. Beethoven does the same thing here, but across the span of four variations. Over the large scale of these variations, there will be a continuous increase of rhythmic activity, an intensification of motion, leading, inevitably, to the climactic final moments of the movement.
 3. Variation 1 subdivides the beat into groups of three and is characterized by a gently rocking rhythmic motion; we hear its opening phrase. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 32 in C Minor, op. 111, movement 2, variation 1.)
 4. Variation 2 subdivides the beat into groups of four and is characterized by a dotted-rhythm dialogue between the bass and the treble. We hear the opening phrase of this variation. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 32 in C Minor, op. 111, movement 2, variation 2.)
 5. In variation 3, the beat is subdivided into groups of eight; the dotted rhythms we heard in variation 2 are now doubled in speed. This variation is filled with life and energy, its dotted rhythms giving it an

- almost ragtime-like feel. Let's hear this variation in its entirety. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 32 in C Minor, op. 111, movement 2, variation 3.)
6. Variation 4 subdivides the beat into groups of nine. At first, a ruminative and serene version of the theme is heard over a throbbing accompaniment, followed by a glorious and ringing passage, in which the theme is embedded in a rippling line heard at the top of the piano. Let's hear the first half of variation 4. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 32 in C Minor, op. 111, movement 2, variation 4, first half.)
- D. What follows now is a "modulatory episode" that brings an end to the ongoing ritual of the variations and the essentially static nature of the form.
 1. The episode begins with a six-measure-long crescendo leading to a trill that sounds as if it is going to cadence to the tonic key of C major, but it doesn't. Instead, it becomes a gigantic triple trill and effects a modulation to Eb major, the first change of key in a movement that has already lasted for 12 minutes.
 2. The episode moves through a number of different key areas until it returns, finally, to C major and the beginning of variation 5. Let's hear this extraordinary episode, during which time itself seems to stand still. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 32 in C Minor, op. 111, movement 2, modulatory episode.)
 - E. This modulatory episode has "wiped the slate clean," so that when the fifth and final variation begins, we do not perceive it as just the "next" variation but, rather, as something fresh and important, as a culmination, rather than a continuation.
 1. Variation 5 synthesizes elements of old and new, the slowest and fastest subdivisions: the *arietta* theme is heard in its original rhythmic form in the top voice, with the fastest subdivision of the beat—the one we heard in variation 4—in the accompaniment.
 2. The effect is amazing; it's the closing of a circle, the moment when the individual merges with the universal.
 - F. The coda that follows is characterized by the "fastest" subdivision of all—a trill. Most of the coda is quiet and heard high in the piano. It is diaphanous and ethereal; the music of twilight, of a place between consciousness and unconsciousness, between life and death, between the corporeal and spiritual. The movement—and the sonata—ends with a hushed cadence that seems to say *amen*. We hear the remainder of the movement: variation 5 and the trilling, otherworldly coda that follows. (**Musical selection:** Piano Sonata no. 32 in C Minor, op. 111, movement 2, variation 5 and coda.)
 - G. Having heard the timeless calm of this second movement's conclusion, we should be quite satisfied that it is the finale of not just this piano sonata but also the final movement of Beethoven's final piano sonata. What could he write, where could he go, after that? After a lifetime of pianistic struggle that began with the Piano Sonata in F Minor in 1795, Beethoven here has gained paradise.
- IV. Beethoven's 32 piano sonatas stand as a singular body of work in the keyboard literature.
- A. Even the 48 preludes and fugues that constitute the two books of Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* do not exhibit the artistic and compositional development that Beethoven's sonatas so magnificently do. Neither do the preludes and fugues of the *Well-Tempered Clavier* aspire to the metaphorical, metaphysical, or programmatic meaning that Beethoven's piano sonatas do. On the contrary, Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* is an encyclopedic collection of relatively short works that aspire to—and achieve—perfection within the constraints, rituals, and limitations of a preexisting aesthetic.
 - B. The *Well-Tempered Clavier* does not trace—as Beethoven's sonatas do—an artistic trajectory, a personal artistic evolution; rather, it embodies a single musical style that Bach arrived at relatively early in his career. Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* is about the harpsichord, and the nature and the limitations of the harpsichord are integral to the conception of the preludes and fugues written for the harpsichord. Beethoven's piano sonatas are not just about the piano but about the developing piano, a growing and evolving instrument that Beethoven pushed to its limits and beyond, writing music for an idealized piano that didn't come into existence until some 40 years after his death.
 - C. Having said all of this, no music more profoundly influenced—more profoundly preconditioned—Beethoven's musical psyche more than that of Johann Sebastian Bach, and no single work of Bach's was more important to Beethoven's musical development than the *Well-Tempered Clavier*. Beethoven perceived in Bach's music a spiritual depth and power, a precision, a concision, a clarity, an ability to make the most out of the least, a masculinity, and a perfection of technique that cut to his soul.

- D.** Beethoven initially came to fame in Vienna as an improviser. The piano was the vehicle through which he could tap and reveal his unconscious musical impulses, a device through which he could receive the instant gratification of making music on the spot. The piano was also his personal musical laboratory, and the piano sonata became, more than any other genre of music, a place where he could experiment with harmony, motivic development, the contextual use of form, and most important, his developing view of music as a self-expressive art.
- E.** The terse and powerful Piano Sonata no. 1 in F Minor of 1795 is the work of a young composer who had already mastered the Classical style. Within just a few years—in the Piano Sonata no. 8 in C Minor, the *Pathétique* of 1799—Beethoven had already moved past the Classical ideal and was attempting to achieve a level of sublime emotion and power that the pianos of his time were incapable of projecting.
- F.** By 1800, each new piano sonata marked such a radical departure from the one that preceded it that it seems as if Beethoven was redefining the genre from day to day. The *Funeral March* Sonata of 1800 was followed by the *Moonlight* Sonata of 1801; followed by the *Pastoral* Sonata, also of 1801; followed by the *Tempest* Sonata of 1802. These amazing sonatas were Beethoven’s workshop, experimental works that made possible his breakthrough piece—the Third Symphony of 1803.
- G.** The great, heroic piano sonatas that immediately followed the Third Symphony—the *Waldstein* and the *Appassionata*, both composed in 1804—are cornerstones of the repertoire and remain, along with the Third and Fifth Symphonies, the ultimate examples of Beethoven’s “heroic” music.
- H.** Beethoven’s later piano sonatas, starting with the Piano Sonata in A Major, op. 101, of 1816, moving through the *Hammerklavier* Sonata of 1818, and the last three sonatas of 1820–1822, became increasingly radical in terms of their harmonic usage, form, and expressive content.
- 1.** Perhaps most important, it was across the span of these last five sonatas that Beethoven truly came to grips with the duality of his musical character—an experimental composer of the Classical era whose essential influence was that of the Baroque composer Johann Sebastian Bach.
 - 2.** Beethoven’s Piano Sonata in C Minor, op. 111 of 1822—his final piano sonata—reconciles fugue and sonata form in its heroic first movement and ends, in its second movement, on a note of sublime and ethereal calm. It is a perfect—and purposeful—conclusion to Beethoven’s magnificent career as a composer of piano sonatas.

MOVEMENT I *Sonata form*

Allegro

Exposition

Theme 1: A series of expansions
 A magnificent fanfare pounds away on the tonic, B^b major triad and spans
 nearly the entire width of Beethoven's piano



a
 B^b major
ff

17 00.24

A third thematic phrase combining elements of phrases *a* (*f*) and *b* (*p*) is heard over a tonic B^b pedal in the bass



c

27

A huge descent and ascent spans the length of the piano and acts to seal off the theme



O
P
E
N

C
A
D
E
N
C
E

38 00.54

Modulating Bridge

Part 1: Expanding outward, the dominant chord of G major—D⁷—is heard across the entire length of the piano, in essence replacing the sound of B^b major with the sound of G major



p

cresc. . . .

f

O
P
E
N

C
A
D
E
N
C
E

op. 106, "Hammerklavier" (1818)

3

A second fanfare expands the range upward

a¹

ff

4 00.06

A lyric phrase is, in itself, an expansion of the fanfare



etc.

b

p

8

A second, longer lyric phrase expands upward even as the bass descends nearly four octaves!

b¹

ff

35 00.47

Two last fanfares bring the theme to its conclusion, the second of which, suddenly and shockingly, lands on a D MAJOR chord, the dominant (V) chord of G major!

⌈
P
A
U
S
E

f

ff

46 01.02

Part 2: A lengthy passage sees a gentle, running figure in two-part imitative polyphony calm and smooth the music even as it solidifies G major, merging seamlessly into . . .

62 01.20

Theme 2: *Tranquillo*

Lyric and gentle, the opening phrase of **Theme 2**, which grows out of the bass, is a free inversion of **Theme 1**, phrase *b*

a
G major
mf

75 01.36

A rippling, descending phrase follows

b
G major

81

b¹

100 02.04

Cadence Material

Part 1: Cadence Theme, Cantabile

A sweet, minor tinted theme heard over rolling accompaniment

a
G major
p

Heard now over both the rolling accompaniment and an extended trill

a¹

66

The next phrase sees the lyric and gentle music rise to the very top of the piano

a¹

70

A brief but almost developmental passage sees the thematic material move through a series of key areas before arriving back to G major

a²

91 01.53

A final, vigorous thematic phrase, reminiscent of the very beginning of the movement, brings **Theme 2** to its conclusion



c
C major → G major

O
P
E
N

C
A
D
E
N
C
E

112 02.18

Part 2: A final, closing passage sees the fanfarish mood of the opening return

ff

1.

Three rising octaves push the music BACK to B^b major!



2.

Three rising octaves move through B NATURAL (♮), and on to the **Development**

Development

124 04.59

Part 1: The final, closing portion of the **Cadence Material** returns in a rising sequence

3x

pp

cresc. . . .

130 05.14

Part 2: The rising octaves that concluded the **Exposition** now push the harmony to E^b major, which is confirmed by two brief but forceful fanfare-like motives

176 06.08

Part 4: A sequence of falling motives based on the fanfare melody of **Theme 1** build toward a huge and dramatic climax

198

Octave Ds dissipate the energy and slow the momentum; it would seem that the harmony is headed for a resolution to G major or minor

 *fff*



212 06.49

Part 6: Retransition
The fanfare melody of **Theme 1** bursts out in the bass, initiating a brief but intense imitative passage based on an $F\sharp^7$ chord, the dominant chord of B major

216

Slowly, the fanfare melody is fragmented and broken down until all that is left are TWO rising notes, imitated back and forth

f

p

f

p

137 05.26

Part 3: FUGATO!

A stirring fugal/canonic episode follows, based on the fanfare melody of Theme 1



E^b major → C minor
p *cresc.* *f*

201 06.35

Part 5: WHOA! The repeated Ds do NOT resolve, but instead move up to a D[♯], and just like that, we hear the Cadence Theme in the remote key of B major!
Cantabile e molto dolce

p

=====
pp

226

At the very last moment, the A[♯] of the F[♯] chord is enharmonically re-interpreted as a B^b and, JUST LIKE THAT, the harmony is redirected to B^b major for the start of the **Recapitulation**

=====
ff

Recapitulation

227 07.03

Theme 1

Jubilantly and magnificently, the fanfare element of **Theme 1** thunders forth over a descending line in the bass

a
B^b major
ff

*a*¹

231

Lyric phrase

☺

O
P
E
N

C
A
D
E
N
C
E

234

The lyric phrase is expanded quite substantially, becoming genuinely developmental and modulatory →

*b*²

267 08.02

Modulating Bridge

Part 1: A series of outward expanding harmonies modulate from B minor to →

294 08.31

Theme 2

Lyric and gentle

a
B^b major

*a*¹

*a*²

306 08.47

Rippling, descending phrase

b

*b*¹

322 09.05

Vigorous, final phrase

c

Coda

351 09.39

Part 1: The explosive, broken octaves that concluded the **Recapitulation** continue in an upward sequence, rising from B^b major through C minor, D minor, E^b minor, and coming to rest on an F⁷ chord, the dominant of the tonic B^b

361 09.49

Part 2: Cadence Theme

Moving freely between B^b major and B^b minor

a

Now more in major than minor, heard over a double trill

*a*¹

372

Four measures of scales which collapse inward onto . . .

249 07.34

A dramatic version of this next thematic phrase, heard over a G^b pedal

c



265 07.58

The previous G^b 's are enharmonically reinterpreted as an F^\sharp , the dominant (V) of B minor, as one last fanfare bursts forth in the COMPLETELY UNEXPECTED key of B minor

ff

P
A
U
S
E

278 08.13

Part 2: B^b major! A gentle, running figure in two-part imitative polyphony calms and smooths the music, merging seamlessly into . . .

330 09.16

Cadence Material
Part 1: Cadence Theme

With trill

a

a^t

343 09.30

Part 2: Closing passage sees the fanfarish mood of the opening return, followed by an explosive cadential passage in broken octaves which merges seamlessly into . . .

376 10.10

Part 3: A series of fanfare motives, drawn from the opening of Theme 1, alternating between *p* and *f* and following the same harmonic sequence as Part 1: B^b major, C minor, D minor, E^b major, and coming to rest on an F^7 chord, the dominant of B^b major

385 10.20

Part 4: A thunderous trill low in the piano accompanies fragments of the fanfare opening of Theme 1

Slowly the energy dissipates . . .

ppp

At the last moment, a *ff* B^b major chord crashes down onto a final octave B^b !!



MOVEMENT II *Scherzo*

Assai vivace

Scherzo I

The scherzo features a compact, four-note, rising/falling motive that grows directly out of the fanfare opening of **Movement I**

Mvmt I 

Mvmt II 



Trio

Like the scherzo, the trio begins with a rising/falling third, now in B^b minor



Presto

In what amounts to a second trio, this *Presto*—DUPLE meter—opens with a varied version of the rising/falling, four-note scherzo motive



<p>Opening phrase sees the four-note scherzo motive sequenced downward by thirds, then upward by step</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>a</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">B^b major</p>	<p>O P E N C A D E N C E</p>	<p>An octave higher</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>a</i>¹</p>	<p>O P E N C A D E N C E</p>	<p>14 00.12 Four-note scherzo motives trace a modulatory path to C minor and then back to B^b</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>b</i></p>	<p>C L O S E D C A D E N C E</p>	<p>An octave higher</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>b</i>¹</p>	<p>C L O S E D C A D E N C E</p>
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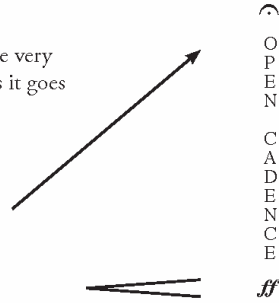
<p>46 00.43 A rhythmically ambiguous passage (where's the downbeat?) sees an arpeggiated B^b minor triad floating atop a rolling accompaniment</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>c</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">B^b minor</p>	<p>Triadic theme in bass; rolling accompaniment on top</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>c</i>¹</p>	<p>63 Triadic theme, a third higher, back on top</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>c</i>²</p>	<p>Triadic theme in bass</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>c</i>³</p>
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<p>81 01.17 A quiet, furtive tune based on the four-note scherzo motive is played, unharmonized, in octaves</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>d</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">B^b minor</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>p</i></p>	<p>89 The tune moves into the bass and alternates with harmonies above</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>d</i>¹</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>cresc.</i></p>	<p>97 The tune, now played in chords, moves to the top</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>d</i>²</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>ff</i></p>	<p>⌒ O P E N C A D E N C E</p>
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Presto (continued)

112 01.33

A huge, SEVEN-OCTAVE scale sweeps from the very bottom to the top of the piano, getting louder as it goes



Scherzo II

115 01.40

Almost exactly as before

a
B^b major

O
P
E
N

C
A
D
E
N
C
E

*a*¹

O
P
E
N

C
A
D
E
N
C
E

01.52

b

C
L
O
S
E
D

C
A
D
E
N
C
E

*b*¹

C
L
O
S
E
D

C
A
D
E
N
C
E

O
C
T
A
V
E

B^b_s

sf

Coda

161 02.22

Part 1: The octave B^bs are quietly but insistently answered by two octave B[♮]s which have been laying in wait since the recapitulation of the first movement; impertinent pups that they are, they would seem to be trying to take over!

O
C
T
A
V
E

B[♮]_s

p

O
C
T
A
V
E

B^b_s

sf

O
C
T
A
V
E

B[♮]_s

p

O
C
T
A
V
E

A[♯]_s

=====

113 01.37

- 3 A strange $F\flat_7$ chord “shake” seeks to re-establish the triple meter.
- 4 Silence follows.
Huh?

Scherzo
motive in
B minor
(have the
B \sharp s won?)

A series of octave B \sharp s is
followed by a panicked
presto; the B \sharp s know they
can't hold . . .

173 02.34

Part 2: The B \sharp falls
to a B \flat , the scherzo
resumes for the
briefest four mea-
sures, and ends, with
infinite delicacy, in
B \flat MAJOR!



MOVEMENT III *Sonata form*
Adagio Sostenuto

Exposition

Theme 1

Just as this sonata went to press, Beethoven added a one-measure introduction to this movement, explaining to the publisher that he wanted to echo the conclusion of the **Scherzo**. In doing so, he created a marvelous connection between the openings of the first three movements. In reverse order:

Mvmt III 

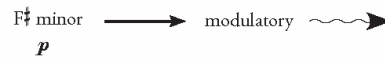
Mvmt II 

Mvmt I 

27 02.37

Modulating Bridge: *Un poco più agitato*

Part 1: An extended episode written in a genuinely operatic style, as a steady, almost hypnotic, accompaniment in the bass and middle voices support an upper line—two soprano voices—of extraordinary flexibility, expressivity, and INTENSITY



45 04.13

Theme 2: *Molto tranquillo*

The arrival in D major at the onset of **Theme 2** provides a physical relief after the chromaticism of the preceding passage. The theme itself, based on a motive first heard during the **Modulating Bridge**, first appears in the deep bass of the piano



a
D major
p

2

Appassionato e con molto sentimento

Somber and soulful, **Theme 1**—accompanied by huge, block harmonies—exploits the sonorous, capabilities of the piano to the utmost degree, and is a perfect example of the sort of piano writing that seems much more suited to a modern grand piano than one of Beethoven's time; the ideal piano Beethoven envisioned but never had the opportunity to play (or hear!)

		10 00.48		18 01.35	∩
<i>a</i>	O P E N	<i>b</i>	C A D E N C E	<i>b¹</i>	O P E N
F# major	C A D E N C E			C A D E N C E	P A U S E
<i>p</i>					

39 03.41

Part 2: This INCREDIBLE passage—on the surface a dominant preparation of **Theme 2**—features, in reality, some of the most chromatic writing this side of the 20th century!

p *f*

53 04.54

A second thematic phrase, accompanied by triplets in the middle voices, leads to a moment of sublime quiet and an . . .

b

O
P
E
N

C
A
D
E
N
C
E

63 05.58

Cadence Material

The open, chordal texture of **Theme 1** resumes as a serene and markedly diatonic (non-chromatic)

Cadence Theme brings the **Exposition** to its conclusion and segues into the **Development**



D major
ppp

Development

69 06.37

Part 1: Theme 1 opening is heard twice in sequence

D major C# major
pp

77 07.23

Part 2: Theme 1 motives are heard over a rolling accompaniment as the harmony modulates through no fewer than 10 DIFFERENT KEYS, arriving, finally, on a C#7 chord, the dominant (V) of the tonic F# minor

Recapitulation

88 08.18

Theme 1

Elaborately embellished with groups of 3 2nd notes (or, of you prefer, “demisemiquavers”)

a
F# major

b

104 09.56

The embellishment, now in sextuplets, moves into the bass

*b*¹

C
A
D
E
N
C
E
P
A
U
S
E

130 12.40

Theme 2

As before, Theme 2 begins deep in the bass; it is heard in the tonic MAJOR, which keeps the movement from devolving too far into darkness

a
F# major

b

138

Coda

154 15.03

Part 1: Theme 1 is heard, initially, in

B minor modulatory ~> *pp*

158 15.28

Part 2: Theme 2 is heard, in varied form, starting deep in the bass

G major modulatory ~> *p* *ff*

166 16.12

Part 3: Theme 1 returns in the tonic key of

F# minor *p*

87

Rippling piano descent/ascent outlines the C \sharp 7 chord

pp



113

11.08

Modulating Bridge

Part 1: Operatic-style episode

124

12.06

Part 2: Dominant preparation for the approaching **Theme 2**

D major \rightarrow modulatory \rightsquigarrow

150

14.39

Cadence Material

The open, chordal texture of **Theme 1** resumes with the serene **Cadence Theme**

153

C
L
O
S
E
D
C
A
D
E
N
C
E

F \sharp major

The harmony suddenly modulates, paving the way for the . . .



174

17.07

Part 4: In a passage reminiscent of the operatic portion of the **Modulating Bridge**, the harmony moves to F \sharp major over a gently rocking accompaniment

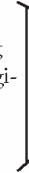
p \longleftarrow *f* \longrightarrow *pp*

181

17.50

Part 5: One final statement of the opening of **Theme 1** begins in F \sharp minor before magically and marvelously shifting to F \sharp major for the conclusion of the movement

F \sharp minor \rightarrow F \sharp major



MOVEMENT IV

The birth of counterpoint
—Rosen

Introduction

In this extraordinary introduction, Beethoven creates a context for the massive fugue that will comprise the great bulk of the movement, just as the introduction to the fourth (and last) movement of his Ninth Symphony (still six years in the future at the time of the *Hammerklavier*) creates a context for the entrance of the voices. This introduction, then, has two essential tasks. First, it will construe the chordal musical materials of the third movement *Adagio* into the linear, polyphonic materials that will comprise the fugue. Second, it will exhibit, in microcosm, the sort of macro-harmonic motion that has characterized the entire sonata to this point—that is, movement by DOWNWARD THIRDS, a far cry from traditional harmonic motion in fifths and fourths.

Part 1: *Largo*

Beginning $\frac{1}{2}$ step below the $F\sharp$ major chord that concluded the third movement, a series of F naturals (\natural) span the length of the piano, covering six octaves in all; $F\sharp$ is the dominant (V) of the sonata's home key of $B\flat$ major. Slowly, more pitches are added to the upper part even as the bass line descends in thirds: $F-D\flat-B\flat-G\flat-E\flat-C\flat$; it's as if Beethoven is creating a universe of pitch from scratch, expanding outward from the singularity of $F\sharp$

The musical score consists of two systems of piano music. The first system shows the beginning of the introduction, with a descending bass line and an ascending upper part. The second system continues the piece, featuring a 'dolce' marking in the upper part and 'espr.' and 'rit.' markings in the lower part. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

5 00.57

Part 2: *Un poco più vivace*

The essentially harmonic/chordal elements of **Part 1** now **TURN TO MELODY** here in **Part 2**, as two B major scales—mostly in contrary motion—announce “the birth of counterpoint” before collapsing into a B major chord, a harmony enharmonically implied by the C^b that had concluded **Part 1** of the introduction

7 01.21

Part 3: *Allegro*

A forceful bit of two-, then three-, then four-part polyphony is heard before being brought up short by a G# minor chord and a bass line that proceeds to again descend by thirds: G#-E-C#-A

Musical score for Part 3: *Allegro*, measures 7-17. The score is in G major (one sharp) and common time. It features a piano introduction with a forte (*fp*) dynamic. The music consists of two-, three-, and four-part polyphony. Dynamics include piano (*p*), crescendo (*cresc.*), fortissimo (*fz*), and piano (*p*). The bass line descends by thirds: G#-E-C#-A. The score ends with a tenuto (*ten.*) marking and a series of fermatas.

18 02.36

Part 5: *Prestissimo*

A loud, widely spaced A major tremolo. The tremolo slows and quiets and thins, leaving only the pitch A in both top and bottom, and the bass drops yet ANOTHER third, down to an F#, the dominant (V) of the home key of Bb major

Musical score for Part 5: *Prestissimo*, measures 18-22. The score is in 3/4 time and features a tremolo. Dynamics include fortissimo (*ff*), decrescendo (*dim.*), ritardando, and pianissimo (*pp*). The bass line drops from A to F#.

13 01.44

Part 4: *Tempo 1*

A series of rising, octave As mirror the rising Fs that began the introduction; following a gently falling line (mostly in thirds) and a series of trills, the bass line, AGAIN descending in thirds, drives the music to . . .

The musical score for Part 4: *Tempo 1* consists of three systems of piano accompaniment. The first system (measures 13-14) is marked *a piacere.* and features a treble clef with a 3/4 time signature. It includes a tenor trill (*ten.*) and *largamente* markings. The second system (measures 15-16) is marked *a tempo.* and includes a *crescendo ed* marking. The third system (measures 17-18) is marked *accelerando molto*. The score includes various musical notations such as trills, triplets, and dynamic markings.

1 02.41

Fugue Introduction: *Allegro risoluto*

The **Introduction** proper is now over. The dominant (V) harmony of B^b is sustained for four measures in a series of trills and scales that will become part of the fugue subject. The long awaited resolution to B^b major FINALLY occurs (see arrow), paving the way for the fugue subject.

The musical score for the Fugue Introduction: *Allegro risoluto* consists of two systems of piano accompaniment in 3/4 time. The first system (measures 1-3) features a treble clef and includes a *pp* dynamic marking and a *cresc.* marking. The second system (measures 4-5) includes a *ff* dynamic marking and a *p* dynamic marking. An arrow points to the resolution of the dominant harmony in measure 4. The score includes various musical notations such as trills, scales, and dynamic markings.

Fugue

6 02.48

The Fugue Subject begins on an F, leaps upward a tenth (an octave and a THIRD) to a trilling A, and then moves through nine measures of blazing scales and passage work. This is music for neither the faint of heart nor the weak of fingers!

Episode

31 03.20

Part 1: Rising, modulatory sequence built on the conclusion of the Fugue Subject, with running 16th notes in the bass part

Restatement

41 03.35

In the BASS, displaced by one beat (subject starts on beat 3 rather than beat 1)

D^b major *poco rit. . . .*

Episode

50 03.46

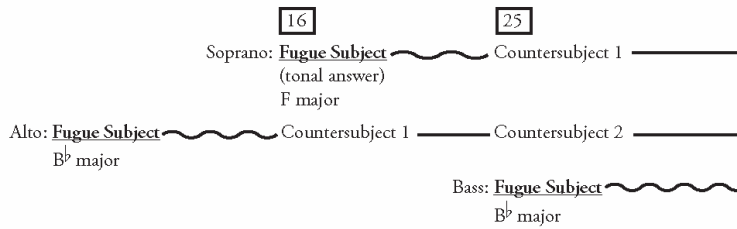
Running 16th notes in the alto

Exposition

6 02.48

Fuga a tre voci, con alcune licenze

(Fugue in three voices with some license/freedom)



38

Part 2: Alternation of the opening leap and trill of the subject in alto and bass with running 16th notes now in the soprano part

Restatement

55 03.52

In the SOPRANO, displaced by one beat (subject starts on beat 2)

A^b major

Episode

61 04.00

A lengthy episode freely develops materials first used in the first **Episode** (measures 31–38); acts to introduce the . . .

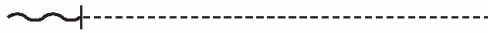
Restatement

100 04.54

Things begin to get interesting as Beethoven constructs a *stretto* by augmentation AND inversion: the tonal answer (subject) in the soprano is overlapped with the subject IN INVERSION in the bass, both parts being augmented!

Trills, trills everywhere! Slowly, the drama and momentum dissipate; the harmony stabilizes on an E^b7 chord, the dominant (V) of A^b major; the music quiets and slows ever so slightly in anticipation of . . .

159



----- New Countersubject —————

————— Retrograde Subject —————

B minor

Episode

165 06.23

An extended episode based on the retrograde/*canonizans* materials just heard

B minor modulatory ~~~~~>

Restatements in Inversion (in what amounts to a THIRD exposition!)

198 07.09

Leaving no contrapuntal stone unturned, Beethoven now explores the possibilities of INVERTING the subject

206

Soprano: Inverted Subject ~~~~~|-----

----- Alto: Inverted Subject (answer) ~~~~~

G major

ff

Episode

225 07.44

Filled with scurrying lines and dramatic trills, this episode reaches a climax as descending octaves lead to two explosive A major chords, heard as being the dominant (V) of D minor

O
P
E
N
P
A
U
S
E

All this was the fire. Now comes the *Still, Small Voice*.

—Tovey

ff

Coda

357 10.50

Part 1: Quietly, almost furtively, each voice enters in turn with the opening leap and trill that characterize the very beginning of the Original Subject

p *cresc. . . .*

359 10.53

Part 2: So much for quiet! Dissonant, arpeggiated diminished harmonies tip upward over a thunderous trill (E^b/F) in the lowest reaches of the piano

ff

371 11.16

Part 3: *Poco adagio*
A quiet dialogue of the trills settles on an F⁷ chord, the dominant (V) harmony of the tonic B^b

p

374 11.38

Part 4: *Tempo 1*
Scales and scale fragments derived from the Original Subject rip downward, leading to . . .

The music quiets and the energy dissipates as an initially descending passage is heard over trilling B^b/C_s and B^b/C^b_s

 **pp**

379 11.44

Part 5: A huge, rising series of trills and leaps—the opening of the **Original Subject**—climb the keyboard, arriving, finally, on a B^b major chord; two last chords—dominant and tonic—follow; labeled *largamente*, the final tonic B^b major chord is to be sustained indefinitely!

⤿
C
L
O
S
E
D

C
A
D
E
N
C
E

